THE MADDOX GROUP

Buyer's Home Guide

Real Estate Made Personal

THE MADDOX GROUP

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MTM REALTY

Hi, I’m Meghan

—a dedicated, results-driven real estate agent who’s passionate about making the home buying or selling process fun, smooth, and rewarding. With a background in social work and a proven track record as a top producer, I combine strong communication with expert market knowledge to help you feel confident every step of the way. I specialize in Northwest Indiana and Southwest Michigan, and I love matching clients with the perfect community to call home. Let’s connect and turn your real estate goals into reality!

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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

Find the right *Agent*

GETTING YOU IN THE DOOR:

- I help narrow down homes that meet your needs and identify potential issues.
- I will request repairs or price changes from sellers as needed.

STAYING ON TOP OF THE PAPERWORK:

- I navigate real estate contracts to ensure nothing is overlooked.
- I help you understand all documentation before you sign.

ON YOUR SIDE:

- As a buyer's agent, I prioritize your interests and ensure competitive offers.
- I stay informed about local market conditions and amenities that impact home value.

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT:

- I collaborate with trusted inspectors and contractors throughout the area to help you make informed decisions and negotiate the best possible outcome.

PROBLEM SOLVER:

- I protect your interests and address any issues that arise to make the home-buying process enjoyable and stress-free.

AFFORDABILITY:
The seller typically pays commissions for both the seller's and buyer's agents.

Prepare *Financing*

HOW MUCH HOUSE CAN YOU AFFORD?

Mortgage lenders recommend you do not buy a home that is more than 3 to 5 times your annual household income. If you are not purchasing a home with cash, you will need a mortgage pre-approval provided by your mortgage lender. A lender will work with you to get a loan that meets your needs. Some buyers are concerned with keeping their monthly payments as low as possible, others want to make sure that their monthly payments never increase.

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

A mortgage requires a good credit score. You can improve your score by:

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

SAVE CASH FOR A DOWN PAYMENT & OTHER EXPENSES

In order to make your dream of buying a home a reality, you will need to save cash for your down payment, earnest money, closing costs & home inspector.

- A Down Payment is typically between 3.5% & 20% of the purchase price
- Earnest Money is money you put down to show you’re serious about purchasing a home. It’s also known as a good faith deposit.
- Closing Costs for the buyer run between 2% & 5% of the loan amount
- A Home Inspection costs $300 to $500

Get Pre- Approved

Being pre-approved, unlike being pre-qualified, means you've actually been approved by a lender for a specific loan amount. You will need to provide documented financial information (income, statements, assets, debt & credit reports etc.) to be reviewed & verified by the lender.

NEEDED

- 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

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)

Start *Home Shopping*

START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE

Time to start shopping! We will take notes on all the homes we visit. It can be hard to remember all the details of each home, so take pictures or videos to help you remember each home, and review the notes you have written. Once we have found THE house for you, we will present an appropriate offer based on recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its current condition. Negotiations may take place after the offer is presented.

We will make sure to check every little detail of each house

•Test the plumbing
•Test the electrical system
•Open and close the windows & doors to make sure they work properly
Evaluate the neighborhood and surrounding areas
•Are the surrounding homes well maintained?
•How much traffic is on the street?
•Is it conveniently located to schools, shopping, restaurants, & parks

Make an Offer

WHEN TO MAKE AN OFFER:
So you have found THE house! Congrats! In today's market, when the demand is higher than the number 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 make 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. A transaction that is not dependent on receiving loan approval is more attractive to a seller. We will make your offer stand out by writing a personal letter to the seller, explaining why you fell in love with their home.
Offer to Close Quickly. Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.

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 forthas 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

During the inspection period, we will schedule an inspection with a reputable home inspector to conduct a thorough investigation of the home. Once this is complete, the inspector will provide us with a list of their findings. You can take the issues as-is or request the seller to address some or all of the findings. We will be mindful and reasonable about smaller items while being very cautious and vigilant regarding potentially significant issues.

Negotiate *Final Offer*

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

1. Ask for credit for the work that needs to be done. Likely, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair the work.
2. Think "big picture" and don't sweat the small stuff. A tile that needs some caulking or a leaky faucet can easily be fixed. Repairs are still up for negotiation, and perhaps a small credit would help with closing costs.
3. Keep your poker face. The listing agent will be present during inspections, and revealing your comfort level with the home could come back to haunt you in further discussions or negotiations.

Appraisal *Ordered*

Your lender will arrange for a third party appraiser to provide an independent estimate of the value of the house you are buying. The appraisal lets all parties involved know that the price is fair. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter. If approved you will receive your final commitment letter that includes the final loan terms & percentage rates.

PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH

This ensures that the seller truly owns the property and any existing liens, loans, or judgments are disclosed.

HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

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

Schedule
Your Move

After Signing

- Finalize Home Mortgage.
- Schedule Home Inspection.
- Declutter! Sort through every drawer, closet, cupboard, and shelf, removing items you no longer need or like. Donate or sell items that are in good condition.
- Get copies of medical records and store them with your other important documents.
- Create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to move.
- Get estimates from moving companies.

4 Weeks Out

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

3 Weeks Out

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

2 Weeks Out

- Secure Home Warranty.
- Get quotes for home insurance.
- Schedule time for closing.
- Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable).
- Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- Minimize grocery shopping.
- Keep on packing!

1 Week Out

- 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.

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 walkthrough of the home within 24 hours of closing to check the property's condition. This final inspection takes about an hour. We will make sure any repair work that the seller agreed to make has been done.
We will be sure to:

- Make sure all appliances are working properly.
- Run the water in all the faucets and check for any possible leaks.
- Open and close garage doors with the opener.
- Flush toilets.
- Run the garbage disposal and exhaust fans.

CLOSING TABLE
Who will be there: Your agent, The seller, The seller's agent, A title company representative, Your loan officer, Any real estate attorneys involved in the transaction.
The closing typically happens at the title company. You will be signing lots of paperwork, so get your writing hand warmed up! Some of the papers you will be signing include the deed of trust, promissory note, and other documents.

CLOSING COSTS
Closing costs can vary depending on your home's purchase price and where you are located. You can generally expect your closing costs to be around 3% to 4% of the home's sale price. These closing costs can sometimes be shared with the seller.

BRING TO CLOSING

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

RECEIVE YOUR KEYS

Congratulations! It was a lot of hard work, but you are now officially homeowners!

Recommended Resources

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Finishing Touches
219-872-8817
Mike

PAINTING

Maria Martinez
219-304-0401

HOUSE CLEANING

Beaches & Buckets
219-877-8395

LANDSCAPING

Richard Luna
219-344-3485

LOAN OFFICERS

THE MORTGAGE EXCHANGE
Peggy Loza 219-814-5805
Allison Dent 630-967-8773

CENTIER
Brooke Christ 219-608-5173

HORIZON
Karol Organ
(219) 362-0829

POWER WASHING

Shoreline Services
219-405-5357