

A photograph of a modern kitchen with white cabinetry, a marble countertop, and a stainless steel range hood. The text "YOUR ROAD TO" is overlaid in a dark blue, sans-serif font. A large, teal, handwritten-style word "Home" is written across the middle of the image, partially obscuring the kitchen scene.

YOUR ROAD
TO

HOME BUYER'S GUIDE



GINNY MARTINS
- & ASSOCIATES -

nice to meet you

GINNY MARTINS

REALTOR®

Thank you for choosing to work with Ginny Martins & Associates in your efforts to find the home of your dreams. We recognize that buying a home is one of the most significant purchases you'll make in your lifetime and therefore it is essential to have an experienced team who is looking out for your best interests.

Ginny has more than 35 years in the real estate industry, assisting buyers and sellers, and has earned the reputation for being a local expert. These are unprecedented times with inventory and interest rates at all-time historical lows, making the home buying process more challenging than ever before. Fortunately, you have found an agency with a strong track record of presenting winning offers. Ginny has an outstanding working relationship with local agents who respect her ability to ensure the process will be smooth from start to finish. Every buyer needs an edge these days and you have found yours!

welcome to our team!



“

Committed to bringing you the most professional, knowledgeable, trustworthy & dedicated service.

My responsibility is protecting the interests of my clients in every transaction.

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Ten Steps TO BUYING A HOME

THE HOME BUYING PROCESS

- 01/ UNDERSTANDING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS
- 02/ UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S MARKET
- 03/ FINANCING YOUR PURCHASE
- 04/ HOME SHOPPING EXPERIENCE
- 05/ WRITING A WINNING OFFER
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UNDERSTANDING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

In real estate, agency is a legal relationship formed between the agent (real estate agent) and the principal (home buyer or home seller). In the state of Massachusetts, it is mandatory for a real estate agent to disclose what types of agency relationship they have with the consumer. For example, in this case, I would be representing you as a buyer's agent. If I was to list your home, I would be representing you as a seller's agent.



WHAT ARE MY LAWFUL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN AGENCY RELATIONSHIP?

OBEDIENCE

I must lawfully carry out your instructions.

LOYALTY

I must always put you before others and do what is best for you.

DISCLOSURE

I must disclose any material facts that may or may not affect your decision to buy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Anything that is known about you or discussed with you is confidential.

ACCOUNTABILITY

I must provide an accurate accounting of documents and funds throughout.

REASONABLE CARE & DUE DILIGENCE

I am expected to have a certain level of knowledge and be able to advise and guide you through the process without harm.

These duties and responsibilities are disclosed through the MASSACHUSETTS MANDATORY LICENSEE CONSUMER RELATIONSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM. This is to be signed at our first meeting to discuss a specific property.

Inventory is at record lows! Interest rates are at historical lows! The pandemic has changed where people want to live and where they can live--and we have observed a mass exodus from the city to the suburbs.

COMPETITION IS FIERCE!

This is a seller's market. In most cases, buyers will not be getting a deal on a house unless you are willing to do lots of updating and major renovations. However, you will be getting a deal on the financing of your home! Four to five years ago, the monthly interest on an \$800K home was \$1,000 more per month. Today's low interest rates give you much more buying power, so ultimately you can afford more.



MULTIPLE OFFER SITUATIONS!



While I try to create them for my sellers, I work hard to prevent them for my buyers; however of late, it's almost impossible. There are just not enough homes out there for the current pool of buyers. I have recently listed homes that have sold for as much as \$91K over asking with more than 10 offers from qualified buyers.

SO HOW DO WE COMPETE?

I have many tricks up my sleeve and creative ways to get your offer to the top of the pile. We will discuss the strategy in detail.





FINANCING YOUR PURCHASE

LENDER *partner*

Whether you are looking to get a pre-approval for a loan or already have a pre-approval and want to get a second quote, I can set you up with my contact at Leader Bank, the largest purchase lender in MA who consistently offers the best rates and service possible.

I have a long history with Leader Bank and they have never let me down in closing a loan on time. Two reasons I recommend them is when listing agents see the pre-approval from Leader, they know the mortgage commitment is going to go smoothly. Additionally, in multiple offer situations, I always have my mortgage lender call the listing agent to assure them that the buyers are strong and they see no issues with obtaining the loan on time.

FINANCING IN *today's market*

The more you can put down, the better.

Many buyers today have been waiting for quite a while to find the right home and in the meantime, they have accumulated quite a bit of cash for the deposit. The larger the deposit, the less risky it is for the seller to choose you in case the house does not appraise at the offer price.



After you have an offer accepted, and you put in your loan application, do not open up a new credit card, it greatly affects credit. You can purchase new furniture on your credit card, just don't open a new one. Do not buy large ticket items like a new car and hold off on that boat!

WHAT OTHER COSTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH PURCHASING AND FINANCING A NEW HOME?

DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF YOUR LOAN, YOU CAN EXPECT TO PAY APPROXIMATELY \$4-5K IN CLOSING COSTS (UNDERWRITING FEES, APPRAISAL, CREDIT REPORT, TAX SERVICES, FLOOD SEARCH, ATTORNEY FEES, TITLE EXAM, TITLE INSURANCE, RECORDING FEES, PLOT PLAN, LIEN SEARCH AND OVERNIGHT/WIRE FEES).

ALSO DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF YOUR LOAN, YOU CAN EXPECT TO PAY ANOTHER \$4-5K OF ESCROW (5 MONTH'S WORTH OF TAXES AND A YEAR OF HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE – FOR EXAMPLE IF TAXES ARE \$10K PER YEAR, YOU'LL PAY $\$833 \times 5$ WHICH IS \$4,154 PLUS \$1,000-\$1,500 IN HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE).

THERE WILL ALSO BE ADJUSTMENTS FOR ITEMS THE SELLER PAID IN ADVANCE SUCH AS TAXES AND/OR OIL/PROPANE, CONDO FEES.



HOME SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

SET UP YOUR SEARCH CRITERIA

- Choose which ever App you are most familiar with (Zillow, Redfin or Realtor.com)
- Select the towns where you want to live
- Don't be too specific with your criteria in this market but certainly add your must-haves (i.e. 2 car garage, central air, etc.)

ATTEND OPEN HOUSES

- The more homes you see, the better.
- See homes in all price ranges so you can see what the different price points get you.
- Let me know when you are attending an open house and sign in with my contact info: Ginny@ginnymartins.com, 508.579.1095
- If it's a home that truly appeals to you, let's go together.
- By Appointment only – because of Covid, most homes nowadays are open house by appointment only. The minute you receive an alert for a home you want to see, contact me immediately to schedule an appointment. Slots fill up quickly.

BE PATIENT

- The right home will come, it just may take time
- Don't be disappointed if you aren't the winning bidder. It's hard to compete against cash and we are seeing quite a few cash buyers out there these days.
- The right thing in real estate usually happens so when the stars and moons line up, you'll know it!



WRITING A WINNING OFFER

YOUR COMPLETE OFFER PACKAGE WILL CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- Signed Massachusetts Mandatory Licensee Consumer Relationship Disclosure form
- Pre-Approval for the amount you are offering to pay or more
- Good faith deposit check for \$1,000 made payable to the listing broker's agency
- Signed seller's disclosure statement if applicable
- Signed lead paint form if house was built before 1978
- Contract to purchase with contingencies
- Any other forms required by the listing broker

All of this can be prepared remotely through a program called Dotloop. Electronic signatures are completely acceptable.

In order to make a good impression from the start, we want to follow the offer instructions perfectly. We will find out when the sellers desired closing date and adhere to their wishes.



WHAT ARE SOME OF MY STRATEGIES TO WRITING A WINNING OFFER?

- Present a complete offer package.
- Include a letter to the seller (love letter).
- Cap the inspection; for example, the inspection would be for informational purposes only and if anything comes up at the home inspection under the cost of \$5K or 10K, we will not ask for repair or credit.
- Have a frank discussion with the listing agent about how to present the best possible offer.
- Be flexible on the closing date.
- Ginny sells the client.
- Have the lender call the listing agent to emphasize your strength as a qualified buyer.
- Offer to install radon if necessary.



WHAT IF OUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED?

- Jump up and down with excitement!
- Set up a home inspection.



06 THE HOME INSPECTION

ACT *fast*

Once your offer is fully executed by the seller, we will need to act quickly to schedule a home inspection. I will provide you with names of inspectors I have observed over the years to be very thorough and informative. I am also obligated to provide you with a Facts for Consumers brochure which provides detailed information about the home inspection process.

WHAT TO *inspect*

You'll want to engage an inspector to perform:

- A standard home inspection
- A radon test
- If private water, a well inspection for quality, flow rates and radon. (Some towns like Hopkinton require the seller to test for quality prior to conveying the property).

OTHER *details*

If during the home inspection the inspector suspects pest or termite damage or the presence of black substance, then you would engage the services of a pest or mold inspector.

It is important to remember that the home inspection is done to identify major mechanical, structural or safety defects to the property. It is not the seller's responsibility to bring their home up to current code or fix cosmetic flaws, but we may ask them to address items that were uncovered at the home inspection that we were not aware of when we made the offer.

An example of a viable repair request would be corrosion to wiring in the electrical panel, a leaking waste pipe or the presence of mold in the attic due to a ventilation issue.

***In most cases I would put in an offer that if radon exceeds the EPA limits of 4.0, seller to mitigate or credit for mitigation prior to closing, HOWEVER, we are in a seller's market and our offer has to be as clean as possible in order to win!

I will negotiate repairs on your behalf, and they will become part of the purchase and sale agreement as a repair addendum. It is important to note that this repair addendum cannot be sent to the lender.





THE PURCHASE & SALE AGREEMENT

Now that we have negotiated the inspection repairs, it is time to engage the services of a conveyancing attorney.

It is customary in the state of Massachusetts to have an attorney represent you through the Purchase and Sale Agreement. Once executed, the P&S will supersede the offer contract. Some lenders require you to use an attorney approved by the bank. If possible, I highly recommend the use of a certain attorney who I have worked with for several years and with whom I have the highest regard for in terms of diligence, thoroughness and responsiveness. Her firm charges less than most and I consider this attorney part of my team.

The purchase and sale agreement goes into much more detail with regards to escrow, transfer of title, time of performance, mortgage contingencies etc. and is designed to protect both parties. The seller will have their own attorney representing them and it is the goal of both attorneys to make the P&S mutually agreeable. Once the attorneys go back and forth with edits, your attorney will have you read it and will review it with you.

THE PROCESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

- Draft P&S will be sent from seller's attorney to buyer's attorney
- Buyer's attorney will propose changes, edits, and additional riders
- Attorneys will come to agreement
- Buyer's attorney will review with you and offer explanations as needed
- In MA, it is tradition for buyers to sign first
- I will send it to you to be signed electronically (each buyer needs a separate email)
- I will collect the P&S deposit check from you and deliver to seller's listing agent (usually this amount is 5% of the purchase price less the \$1,000 you gave with the offer)
- Once the P&S is fully executed by both parties, it is sent to the bank
- The lender will order the appraisal and begin the underwriting process

CAN I GET OUT OF THE CONTRACT ONCE THE P&S IS SIGNED?

- More than likely, you have a Mortgage Financing Contingency in the P&S. If so and you are unable to obtain a commitment from a lender to finance the property with a mortgage, (maybe because of a job loss) then you would be able to exercise the right to withdraw from the contract pursuant to the terms and thus be entitled to a full refund of the deposit money.
- If you decide you don't want the house anymore after the P&S is signed, you would be at risk for losing your deposit.



THE APPRAISAL & MORTGAGE COMMITMENT

Now that the P&S has been executed, the bank will begin the underwriting process. One of the first items will be to order your appraisal.



The appraiser will reach out to the listing agent to set up an appointment for a walk through of the property and take photos. When the appraisal is complete, the underwriting process continues.

Your lender will also be reaching out to you for items needed along the way.

MORTGAGE *commitment*

In your offer and the P&S, we stated we would have a mortgage commitment by a specific date. More often than not, this date gets extended... not because of your qualifications, but because the lender needs additional information or verification before issuing the commitment letter and what's called the "clear to close".

Once that is issued, you have satisfied all the contingencies of the agreement and we are ready to set up the final walk-thru before closing.



THE FINAL WALK-THRU

You've made it to the one yard line! The purpose of the final walk thru is to make sure the home is in the same condition as it was when you signed the purchase and sale agreement.

Per the terms of the P&S, the home needs to be delivered in broom swept condition and free of any personal belongs of the seller. This is when we make sure everything is working as it was during the inspection and any items that were negotiated for repair have been completed to our satisfaction (receipts will be provided beforehand).

Once we are satisfied at the house, we are off to the closing.



YOUR CLOSING DAY

By now, you have reviewed the closing disclosure your attorney gave you explaining exactly what funds you need to bring with you to closing.

Closings traditionally have taken place at the Registry of Deeds for the county in which your property is located. But with the advance of Electronic Recording capabilities, closings often take place at the Closing Attorney's office.

You should allow about 60 minutes for the closing.

Your attorney will tell you exactly what you need to bring to the closing such as a drivers license, certified check for the amount on the closing disclosure and a checkbook in case something did not make it onto the closing disclosure (CD) in time.

Once your loan documents are signed, the attorney's office will file them electronically with the registry of deeds and when they are formerly on record, the house is now yours!

congratulations!

client testimonials

Ginny did an excellent job and went above and beyond to help with this sale. Her expertise was invaluable. She was straightforward in explaining all aspects of the property and process. She was a delight to work with and I feel very fortunate to have her as my agent.

MARILYN D. | PURCHASED A HOME IN SHREWSBURY

We wanted to buy long term house that met a long list of criteria. Ginny was determined to find everything on our list and she over-delivered! We are so pleased with our new home.

She coached us on making a great offer since it was a competitive marketplace for the homes we were viewing. She was excellent and negotiating and we really felt she represented for the best possible deal. Ginny's customer service was excellent and she was available and responsive.

We highly recommend!

ED H. | PURCHASED A HOME IN NORTHBOROUGH

I got to see Ginny's professional excellence in real estate when purchasing our home in Southborough last year. This deal would not have happened without her! Being engineers, of course my husband and I provided her a spreadsheet with our home search criteria and a color-coded map of towns by school ratings. Not only did she embrace that, she responded with spreadsheets showing comparable statistics for listings we liked.

Through her extensive network in the Southborough area, she found out about a house coming soon to the market and she knew it checked all of our boxes. We were able to jump on it when it came on the market and avoided a bidding war.

Having resided in Southborough for many years, Ginny is an expert resource and always happy to share referrals for contractors and service providers with her clients. I've met many people in town this past year who bought a house with Ginny involved and they all have positive feedback! She is well respected and should be your first call if you are looking to buy or sell in the MetroWest area.

KERRY M. | PURCHASED A HOME IN SOUTHBOROUGH

