

WELCOME

homaha

A HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

**Better
Homes**
and Gardens.
REAL ESTATE

THE
GOOD LIFE
GROUP

CATHY IN
Omaha
Cathy Hirsch, REALTOR®

nice to meet you



CATHY HIRSCH

REALTOR®

Well, hello there! I'm "Cathy in Omaha" and I help people love where they live. Specifically, I'm talking Omaha and the surrounding areas. I'm a native Nebraskan who has spent my career in marketing and entertainment for several local and worldwide brands. Through my travels and work with small businesses across the nation, I have come to recognize Omaha as truly one of the best cities out there. What better way to foster that joy of community in others than to help them find the perfect home for their family? That's the fuel that lit my fire to become a licensed REALTOR® with Better Homes And Gardens Real Estate The Good Life Group.

I have a passion for helping to promote small, local business owners and am one, myself! A long-time volunteer in the arts, you may have caught me in any number of theatrical productions across Omaha-area stages. Wanna talk design? I'm a real nerd for it and document my DIY successes and failures on my website.

I'm honored and delighted to help you through the home-buying process!

LET'S CONNECT



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cathyinomaha.com



facebook.com/cathyinomaha



instagram.com/cathyinomaha



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youtube.com: cathy in omaha



pinterest.com/cathyinomaha



“

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

**I'm committed to
representing you in the
most stress-free,
informative, and fun way
possible.**

”

TO BUYING A HOME

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01

FIND THE RIGHT AGENT

Buying a home is one of the most significant purchases in a lifetime. It is essential to have an 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.

HANDLING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

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.

02/

PREPARE FINANCES



HOW MUCH HOUSE CAN YOU AFFORD?

Many 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.



03/

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.



PREPARING

for a home

own





GET *qualified*

TYPE OF LOAN	CREDIT SCORE	DOWN PAYMENT
VA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
USDA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
FHA LOAN	580+	3.5%
	500-579	10%
203K LOAN	640	3.5%
CONVENTIONAL 97	620	3%
CONVENTIONAL LOAN	640	5-20%

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

*Cathy is not a financial adviser. Always confirm numbers with your lender.

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

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START Shopping



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 video 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?



MAKE AN offer

05/

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 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 is more attractive to a seller

•Inspections

Did the seller do a pre-inspection? What kind of inspections do you feel you need?

•Closing Day

When do you need to move? Do you have a lease or other reasons for a specific date?



THE PROCESS

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 escrow period. Now inspections, appraisals, or anything else built into your purchase agreement will take place.





ESCROW *period*

06/ ORDER AN INSPECTION

During the inspection period, we will schedule an inspection with a reputable home inspector to do 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 on smaller items, while being very cautious and vigilant of potentially significant issues.



07/ NEGOTIATING REPAIRS

Very few houses will come out perfectly clean after the home inspection, and those issues can result in another round of negotiations.

I'm there with you every step of the way during the inspection.

This is your chance to measure whether your bedroom furniture will fit or take photos to show off your favorite home feature to your friends and family.

Think "big picture" and don't sweat the small stuff. 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.



08/ 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 holds up to market value. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter.

When approved you will receive your closing disclosure that includes the final loan terms & percentage rates.

Property Title Search

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

Homeowner's Insurance

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

09

scheduling YOUR MOVE



AFTER SIGNING

- DELIVER/PAY EARNEST DEPOSIT
- LET LENDER KNOW (I will forward the paperwork to your lender)
- SCHEDULE HOME INSPECTION
- 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
- 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

- ARRANGE APPRAISAL (LENDER WILL DO THIS)
- COMPLETE TITLE SEARCH (TITLE COMPANY WILL DO THIS)

2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- SECURE HOME WARRANTY
- GET QUOTES FOR HOME INSURANCE
- SCHEDULE TIME FOR CLOSING & WALKTHROUGH
- 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 FINAL WALK THROUGH
- 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





CLOSING

day



10

closing day



ESCROW PERIOD

Closing is when you sign documents to make it official! Typically, a closing takes six to eight weeks.



CLOSING DISCLOSURE

Lenders are required to provide you with a closing disclosure, to be signed off on at least three days before closing. This will show you what your final loan terms are and what closing costs will be. This is done to ensure that there are no surprises at the closing table. If there is a discrepancy between the loan estimate and the closing disclosure, we must notify your lender immediately.



FINAL WALKTHROUGH

You will have an opportunity to do a final walkthrough of the home within 3 days of closing. This is your opportunity to make sure the home is in the same condition as when you agreed to purchase it, any repairs you've requested have been made and receipts reviewed, and that there is no other damage or changes made to the property.



CLOSING DAY

Who will be there:

- Your agent
- A title company representative
- Possibly your loan officer

You will be signing lots of paperwork so get your writing hand warmed up!



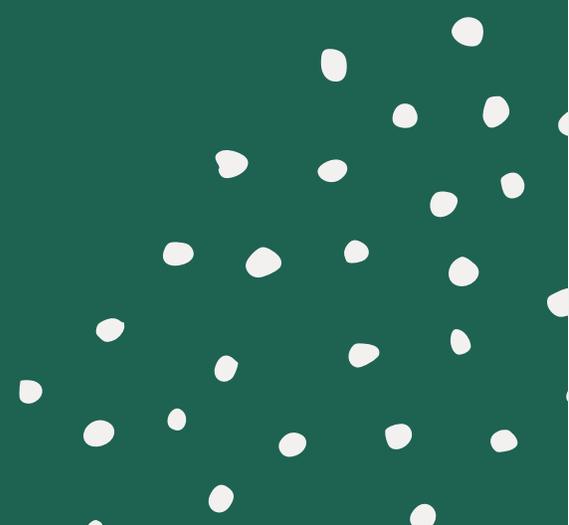
BRING TO CLOSING

- Driver's License
- Cashier's check, unless your funds are being wired.



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!





TESTIMONIALS

REVIEWS



"Cathy helped us buy our new house and sell our old one and she did a wonderful job! She was very responsive, professional, knowledgeable and available anytime we wanted to drop everything and go look at a house. Her staging expertise really set our home apart from the competition. **Would HIGHLY recommend Cathy if you're considering a move in the Omaha area.**"

"I never wanted the process to end because I still wanted to be her best friend."

"I loved working with Cathy! She was so helpful in the process of buying my first home. She even helped me find a lender who explained everything in detail and had a first time 'home buyer class' so I really understood what I could expect. **She was responsive, patient and thoughtful.** We had a lot of fun looking at several older home and she helped me get what we like to call the 'Unicorn House' (great location AND great layout). I couldn't recommend her enough!"

"If you are looking to buy, Cathy has been amazing to work with and so thoughtful. She answered alllllllll my questions. **I can't recommend her enough!**"

"Cathy helped my parents sell their home after they moved out of state. **She really went the extra mile to make sure the process went smoothly for them.** She also managed an excellent sales process and produced multiple bids above asking price."

"Words can't express my gratitude for the lifesaver that is Cathy Hirsch. During my extremely stressful home and life transition, Cathy went so far above and beyond doing things to help get my home ready to sell I'd never have wanted to ask but didn't have time to do myself, and she just sprung into action. Getting my home ready for sale, taking into consideration the stress of my situation and the needs of my toddler, going the extra mile, helping me find the perfect new home in the limited timeframe required, all of this was handled with the upmost professionalism, urgency, and compassion. **Seriously, if you have any business selling, buying, or anything else in real estate, get this Pro involved!**"

"I think our success is more of a reflection on her **creativity and knowledge of the local market** that got us into a new home and quickly selling our old one."

Cathy recently helped me sell my condo and she made the whole process surprisingly effortless. This was my first time selling a place and she patiently answered all of my questions and walked me through all the steps and paperwork. **What truly sets her apart is her keen eye for the simple yet impactful updates that can make your staged home stand out against the competition.** In the end, my condo sold for more than I had originally expected. If you're looking for a realtor in the Omaha area, I highly recommend Cathy!"

OTHER CLIENTS HAVE REPORTED

Positive Experiences WITH

LENDERS

BENCHMARK MORTGAGE | Rachel Pierce | 712.355.2040 |

rachel.pierce@benchmark.us

GUILD MORTGAGE | Nikki Adolf | 402.763.2960 |

nadolf@guildmortgage.net

TITLE

NEBRASKA TITLE | Laura Singleton | 402.492.2406 |

lsingleton@nebtitleco.com

HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE

MY INSURANCE | Mary Sladek | 402.991.6688

ALL STATE | Danny Schlitz | 402.592.1387

HOME WARRANTY

2-10 Home Warranty | 210.com

SERVICE ONE | serviceone.com

INSPECTORS

HUNTER HOME INSPECTIONS | Matt Baker | hunterhomeinspection.com

NATIONAL PROPERTY INSPECTIONS | npiweb.com

VENDOR REFERRALS



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