

your home buying guide

Helping you move from the life you have
to the life you **dream about.**



**Ruhl
& Ruhl**
REALTORS



As you begin the process of buying a house, you may be wondering where to start and what to expect. We are here to **offer the tools and resources** to help you **understand the buying process** prior to your transaction, so you can **position yourself to make the best possible decisions.**

We have a fiduciary responsibility to **look out for your interests.** Enclosed in this packet, you will find information, guidance, and worksheets to help you **imagine and identify what you truly want in your future home.**

Our buyer system has been tested and refined to:

- Help make sure you don't miss out on anything
- Understand the local market
- Find the right house for the right price
- Have a smooth transaction

During our buyer consultation, we will discuss **what you can expect** in your buying journey, review **current market trends**, and narrow down the houses on the market to **find the right one for you.**

We look forward to guiding you on your way home!



Beth & Alan Brockette

The Brockette Homes Team

BrocketteHomes@RuhlHomes.com

319-551-8692

www.BrocketteHomes.com

BROCKETTE HOMES

Creating memorable real estate experiences, worthy of referral!

*Meet the
Team...*



Broker Associate

BETH BROCKETTE

is expert at listing homes to sell. She helps stage your home and develops a marketing plan to attract your buyer. Buyers find her strong negotiating skills an important advantage.



Sales Associate

ALAN BROCKETTE

is our REALTOR® specializing in investment properties and commercial real estate. He also handles transactions from accepted offer to close.



JULIE BORKOSKY

is our talented and creative Marketing Assistant. She makes us look good, and your home too!

We Provide MEMORABLE SERVICE

- Above & Beyond service customized to client's needs
- Advanced online marketing
- Buyer & Seller written services guarantee
- Staging services
- Social Media promotion
- Preferred vendor relationships

People are TALKING...

...about INTEGRITY

Beth and Alan were awesome. They walked me through the process, explaining everything, and answered all my questions with passion.

-James L.

...about RESULTS

Beth and Alan made this not only a pleasant experience, but stress free for me as I sold my parents' home. They also helped both my kids in their selling and buying needs. We have all been happy with our experiences.

-Mike H.

...about SERVICE

Beth and Alan were wonderful and provided us with great personal service.

-Kevin & Salakjit H.

...about BROCKETTE HOMES!

...about KNOWLEDGE

The Brockettes are the ultimate professionals when it comes to real estate. We had to move out of state before closing, and they updated us continually about the process and what step was next.

-Judy S. & Robert K.

...about COMMITMENT

Beth and Alan are the best! They helped us immensely with the purchase of our first home. No questions were left unanswered, and they always made time to check in with us and keep us updated. They are a fantastic duo!

-Kendra P. & Trevor E.

The BROCKETTE HOMES Experience

We work hard to provide quality service to our clients, leading to the most positive real estate experience possible. As your REALTORS®, here are some of the ways we serve your needs:

- Sharing our knowledge and skills
- Respecting and valuing each relationship
- Connecting people with resources
- Staying current with healthy home and green technologies
- Finding solutions and resolving conflicts
- Using technology to maximize marketing and service
- Committing to the best interests of our clients

BETH BROCKETTE

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Licensed to Sell Real Estate in Iowa

Creating memorable real estate experiences, worthy of referral!

Put an Experienced Buyer Representative to Work for You

- **Property Search**

Your buyer representative will appraise your particular criteria for a house and neighborhood, then search for properties that fit those specifications. Your buyer representative will set appointments for showings and monitor the market as new listings become available.

- **Market Data**

Market value is determined by many factors, including the availability of similar properties at competitive prices, location, condition, and most of all the price that a knowledgeable buyer is willing to pay. Your buyer representative will provide market data to help you establish an offering price.

- **Purchase Offer**

There may be other considerations besides price that are equally important in structuring a purchase offer. The terms and conditions of the offer, amount of deposit and possession date are likely to be factors when an offer is made. Your buyer representative will help in your preparation of a purchase offer.

- **Negotiating**

When a purchase offer is made, the sellers may be concerned with certain aspects including the ability of the purchasers to fulfill their agreement, the terms and conditions of the offer, the breakdown of closing costs between buyer and seller and even the motivations and lifestyle of the prospective new owners! Your buyer representative will help structure a negotiating strategy that will create the desired result, a new home.

- **Handling Details**

A lot has to happen between signing the purchase offer and moving into a new house. Your buyer representative will attend to the details and keep you in touch with the transaction each step of the way.

Sellers list their homes with real estate agents to ensure professional representation throughout the home selling process. As a buyer, you deserve the same kind of service!



Beth & Alan Brockette, ABR, ASP, CNHS, CRS, GREEN

Office: (319) 551-8692

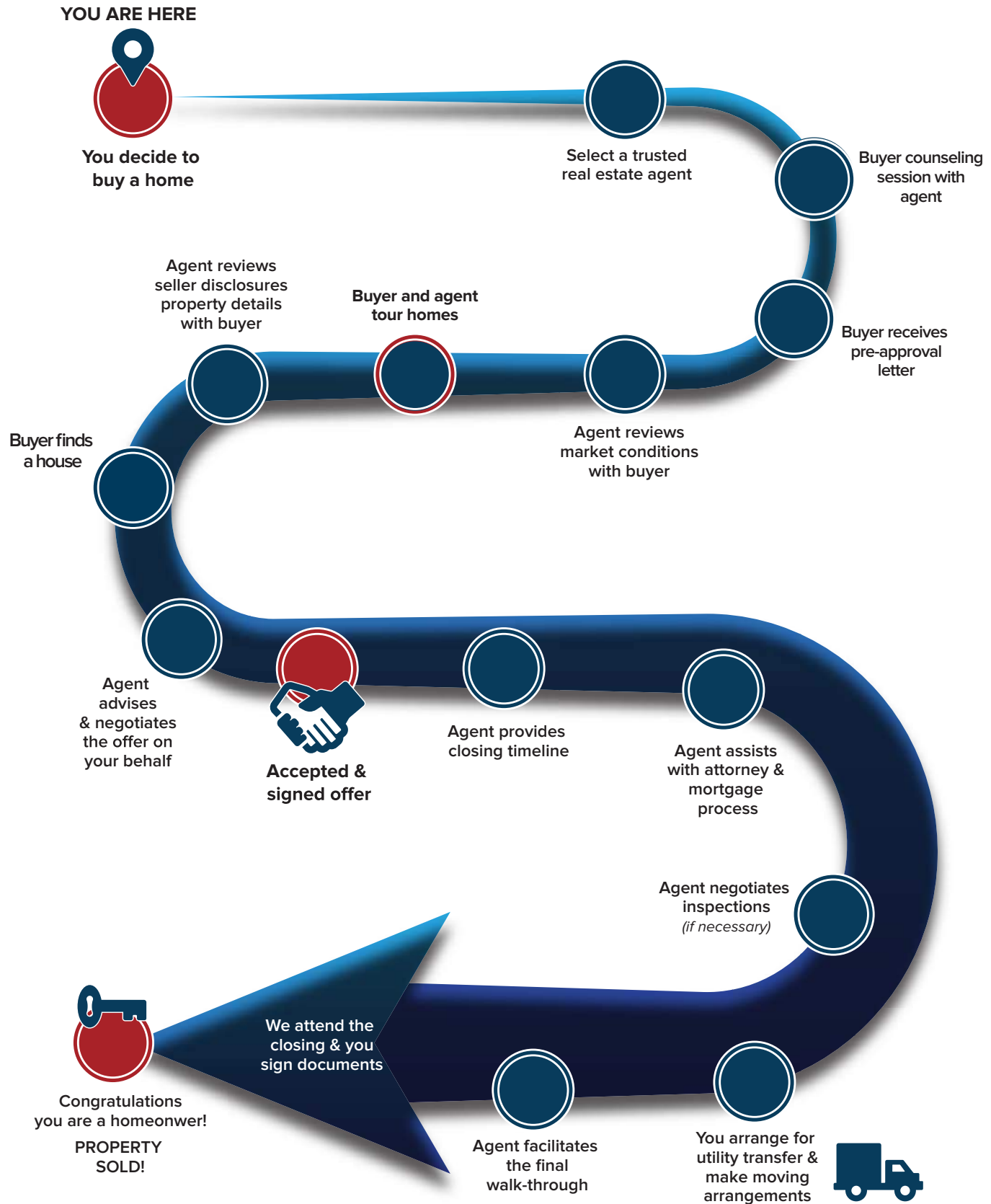
E-Mail: BrocketteHomes@RuhlHomes.com

Website: www.BrocketteHomes.com

Facebook: Facebook.com/BrocketteHomes

STEPS IN THE BUYING PROCESS

There are several steps you will need to go through when you buy a home. Here is an outline of what to expect. We can go over this in more detail and feel free to ask questions about the process. Knowing what to expect and thinking through the steps in advance will help you have a smoother home buying journey.



KEY TERMS TO KNOW

Here's a list of several common terms in the homebuying process.

APPRAISAL

A professional analysis used to estimate the value of a home. This is a necessary step in validating a home's worth to you and your lender as you secure financing.

CLOSING COSTS

The fees required to complete the real estate transaction. Paid at closing, they include points, taxes, title insurance, financing costs, and items that must be prepaid or escrowed.

CREDIT SCORE

A number ranging from 300-850 that's based on an analysis of your credit history. This score helps lenders determine the likelihood you'll repay future debts.

DOWN PAYMENT

Down Payments are typically 3-20% of the purchase price of the home. Some 0% down programs are also available.

MORTGAGE RATE

The interest rate you pay to borrow money when buying a home. The lower the rate, the better.

PRE-APPROVAL LETTER

A letter from a lender indicating you qualify for a mortgage of a specific amount. This is a critical step in today's competitive market.

MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE (MLS)

The shared database where you can view any home listed by any Realtor from any company.

REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

An individual who provides services in buying and selling homes.

Real estate professionals are there to help you through the confusing paperwork, find your dream home, negotiate any of the details that come up, and so you know exactly what's going on in the housing market.

BUYER'S HOMEWORK

To help make our time together more efficient when we meet, here are a few items to think about and information to gather. We can answer any questions regarding these documents or processes when we get together.

- 1. Questions/Concerns:** Write down any questions or concerns you have about this buyer's packet, the buying process, preapproval, or finding the right home for you.
- 2. Your Timeline:** Think about your ideal timeline. When would you like to move? Is there anything preventing you from moving? What are the earliest and latest acceptable dates for you to close?
- 3. Your Wishlist:** Prepare a list of what you want in your home. What are the features you are looking for? Why are these features important to you?
- 4. Communication:** What are your preferred methods of communication? Who should be notified regarding updates during the buying process?
- 5. Selecting a Lender:** Do you have any questions about the mortgage lending process? Do you have a preferred lender?
- 6. Home Tours:** What is your preferred method of touring a home (open house, virtual tour, etc.)? Do you have any concerns about home tours?
- 7. Submitting an Offer:** Do you have any questions about the process of submitting an offer or the paperwork required?
- 8. Inspections:** Do you have any concerns about the inspections process or what the results of an inspection could mean for your transaction?
- 10. Closing Day:** Write down any questions you have regarding closing day, what to expect, or what you should and shouldn't do in the time between your offer being accepted and closing day.

DETERMINE YOUR BUYING POWER

Our goal is to help you become clear and confident in your purchase, and we recommend a consultation with a quality loan officer to ensure a smooth and enjoyable process. Getting pre-approved is an important first step. A good loan officer will help you determine a price range you are comfortable with, and will help educate you on the various costs to consider throughout the process.

MORTGAGE PRE-APPROVAL

It's important to set up a meeting with a lender to determine a comfortable price range through pre-approval. A knowledgeable loan officer also will be able to advise you on special loan programs, loan products, tax incentives and other financial considerations. These will stretch your budget throughout your search and save you money in the long run. There are many benefits of a preapproval:

- Determines your affordable price range
- Aids your new home search
- Shows you are a serious buyer
- Gives you added leverage when buying a home
- Makes your offer more attractive, as sellers know you are ready to buy

Ruhl Mortgage serves the same regional market as Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors, encompassing 10 MLS's (Multiple Listing Services) throughout eastern Iowa, northwestern Illinois, and southwestern Wisconsin. Loan officers are located in Davenport, Galena, Bettendorf, Moline, Dubuque, Iowa City, Muscatine, and Clinton, with travel to other locations as needed.



RUHL MORTGAGE

Ruhl Mortgage partners with Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors to offer a convenient one-stop experience for both home buying and home financing needs. You and your agent work closely with a Ruhl Mortgage Loan Officer who is a local expert and who will keep you informed and updated on the financing process.



RuhlMortgage.com is a valuable source to find information about different loan products, current mortgage rates, on-line application availability, and a variety of loan calculators. When you are ready to apply, submit the easy-to-complete loan applications. If questions come up at any point in the process, conveniently communicate directly with your local loan officer. Visit **RuhlMortgage.com** to get started!

NMLS# 935629, IL Residential Mortgage Licensee# MB6760937. For more information regarding licensing, go to www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org.

RATEPLUG

Presenting home-affordability information in a simple, straightforward way, RatePlug gives you real-time access to property details, loan options, and a mortgage calculator all in one place. In RatePlug's interface, you can communicate directly with your Ruhl Mortgage Loan Officer and apply for pre-approval with only a few clicks. Access this tool on listings on Ruhlhomes.com.

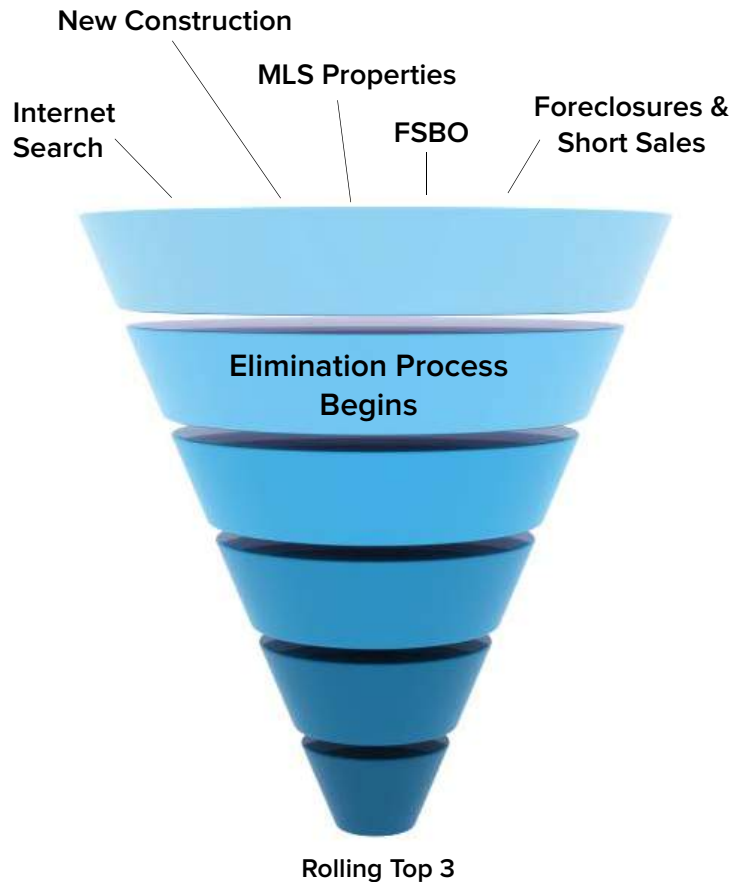


FINDING YOUR HOME

Once you are clear on what you're looking for, your search can begin. We will guide you through the process but you will control all of the decisions. We use the comfortable process of elimination rather than the often frustrating process of selection. To do this, we start with all of the possible properties and then narrow down the options by eliminating any that don't meet your needs/requirements. We call this the "Funnel Process." You can learn more about it below.

We will continue to eliminate properties that don't work until we can get to your rolling top three, which is a list of your favorites, and they will change and modify over time.

Your Ruhl&Ruhl Realtor will help you narrow down your choices. We will review these properties and learn what features were most important. We'll go from potentially thousands of properties in the funnel to hundreds and then to dozens, as we begin to eliminate those that don't work.



As we go through this process of elimination, our goal will be to find your top three favorite homes that could work for you. This can be a rolling top three, so if you find a home you like better than one in your current top three, you can substitute it.

Define Your Dream Home

Write in your preferences and rate them: 3= Vital, 2= Very Important, 1= Neutral, 0= Not Important

LOCATION	PREFERENCES	RATING
Neighborhood		
School district		
Near public transportation		
Near airport		
Near expressway		
Near shopping		
Great views		
TYPE OF HOME	PREFERENCES	RATING
Single-family / condo / townhome		
Minimum / maximum property age		
Willingness to renovate		
Architectural style		
Open floor plan		
SIZE & MAKEUP	PREFERENCES	RATING
Minimum # of bedrooms		
Minimum # of bathrooms		
Eat-in kitchen		
Family room		
Formal dining room		
Formal living room		
Garage (number of cars)		
Outdoor space (size/use)		
Laundry room		
AMENITIES	PREFERENCES	RATING
Wood floors / carpeting		
Heating / cooling system types		
Fireplace		
Pool		

OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS / PREFERENCES	



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Home Buyer's Scorecard

ADDRESS						
FEATURES	HOME 1	HOME 2	HOME 3	HOME 4	HOME 5	HOME 6
Suitable Location						
Price						
Architectural Style						
Living Room						
Dining Room						
Kitchen						
# of Bedrooms						
Baths						
Additional Rooms						
Floor Plan						
Additional Features						
Garage						
Lot/Landscaping						
Utility						
Information						
How likely are you to buy this home?						
<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:</p>						

EXPERIENCE RUHLHOMES.COM

Our award-winning website gives you access to 11 MLS feeds and allows you to search for homes right from the homepage. For additional options and resources use our dropdown menus, listed below.

BUY

Property Search - Filter for your perfect home. Refine your search by property type, such as new construction, farm & land, and foreclosures, as well as neighborhood, price range, status, beds, baths and more.

Map Search - Zoom in and draw boundaries to view listings in your desired location.

New Listings - Find the most recent listings all in one place.

Open Houses - View dates and times of open houses for properties you are interested in.

Sold Properties - See what homes have recently sold in your desired area.

More Buying Resources are also available under the “Buy” menu, including a Guide to Buying a Home, FAQs, Paperwork, and more!

AGENTS

Agent Search - If you are in need of an agent, search by name or office to find contact information and bios for all of our amazing agents.

FACTS & TRENDS

Blog - Find out about company updates, events, and activities in our local areas.

Market Trends - Find in-depth market conditions for your desired area.

COMMUNITIES

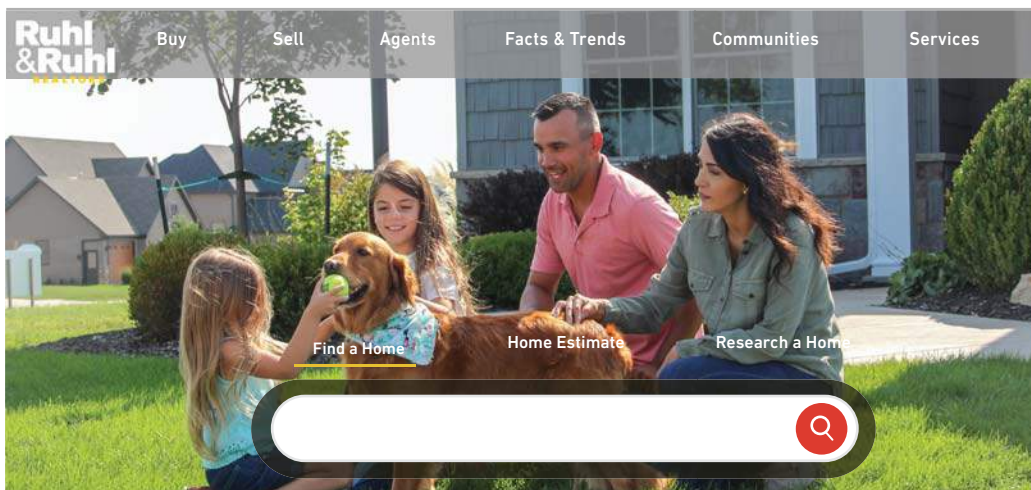
All Communities - Learn more about the local history, attractions, amenities, and what makes each of our over 130 communities special.

SERVICES

Find our local recommended home vendors, utility resource guide, Ruhl Mortgage, Nelson Brothers Insurance and Home Warranties.

SIGN IN - BE THE FIRST TO KNOW

Log in to save your favorite properties and receive alerts for new listings that match your criteria.



BENEFITS OF USING HOMESNAP

Search for a home from anywhere! Here's how you can get started:

Open the invitation to join Homesnap that your agent sends you through text or email. Accept the invite to be directed to your agent's profile page. Download the app to your mobile device.

Once you have connected with your agent and downloaded the app, you can begin taking advantage of everything the platform has to offer:



Private Messages

Keep all of your real estate conversations in one place. Using Homesnap's in-app messaging, you can easily share, and discuss property information with your agent, family members, and friends. Their replies will appear in the app, so you can explore and discuss houses in one place.



Snap & Search Homes

Get the scoop on over 90 million homes using the Homesnap camera. Simply take photos of the properties that interest you and instantly get up-to-date information.



Accurate Data

View historical data, just-sold information, and price estimates on any property. The search portal uses real-time MLS information, so you have the most accurate details about the home you're interested in at your fingertips.



Public Schools

Search using boundary maps and the school rating filter to find homes in the school districts that are the best fit for your family.



Visit Your Agent's Link and Get the App

Enter the Homesnap web address followed by your agent's First name - Last name

(For Example: www.homesnap.com/Chris-Beason)

MAKING AN OFFER

Once you have found your home, writing an offer is the next step in the process. We will help you structure an offer that will put you in the best negotiation position possible. This strategy will vary depending on market conditions, property type, location, and unique personal situations to the buyers and/or sellers.

HOW TO PREPARE TO MAKE AN OFFER

Before you are ready to make an offer, be sure you understand the road ahead. You want to think through everything that happens after you make the offer, prepare for negotiations and learn about the paperwork. These next steps are worth investing time to understand because they often go quickly but are crucial to your success in the process.

Negotiations hinge on five points that both the buyer and the seller must agree on:

- The price
- The terms (earnest money, down payment, financing or cash)
- The dates (closing and possession)
- Contingencies (loan, inspections, attorney approval, etc.)
- Inclusions and Exclusions



PAPERWORK

There are several forms and disclosures necessary for the purchase of a home. Below are some of those documents you will need to complete. Your Realtor will review each of these documents with you.

Agency Representation: Governs your relationship with your agent and explains their responsibilities to all parties and to you as their client.

Family of Services: This form is presented to all clients as required by law and provides you with notice that Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors has established relationship with Ruhl Mortgage, Nelson Brothers Agency and American Home Shield, Inc. (AHS).

Seller Property Disclosure: Written disclosure statement about the property. The seller is required to disclose information about the property's condition that might negatively affect its value.

Lead-Based Paint Disclosure: Written disclosure about any knowledge of lead-based paint. Only applies to properties built prior to 1978.

Purchase Agreement: A binding contract between a buyer and seller that outlines the details of a home sale transaction. The buyer will propose the conditions of the contract, which the seller will then either agree to, reject or negotiate.

Addendum: A document attached to and made a part of the original contract at the time it is prepared.

TIPS TO MAKE A STRONG OFFER

It's crucial that you understand the market conditions and how they will affect your negotiation. This will guide you in making a confident and competitive offer. Here are five keys to success for this important stage in the homebuying process.



1. LISTEN TO YOUR REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

We are here to be your primary source for answers to the questions you have when you're ready to make an offer.

2. UNDERSTAND YOUR FINANCES

Having a complete understanding of your budget and how much house you can afford is essential. The best way to know this is to get pre-approved for a loan early in the homebuying process.



3. BE READY TO MOVE QUICKLY

In today's competitive market, it is important to stay agile and vigilant in your search. As soon as you find the right home for your needs, be prepared to submit an offer as quickly as possible.

4. MAKE A FAIR OFFER

It's only natural to want the best deal you can get on a home. Don't submit an offer that will be tossed out as soon as it's received. The expertise your agent brings to this part of the process will help you stay competitive.



5. BE A FLEXIBLE NEGOTIATOR

After submitting an offer, the seller may accept it, reject it, or counter it with their own changes. In a competitive market, it's important to stay nimble throughout the negotiation process. You can strengthen your position with an offer that includes flexible move-in dates, a higher price, or minimal contingencies; however, certain contingencies you don't want to forego.

FROM ACCEPTANCE TO CLOSING

Congratulations! Your offer was accepted, but there is plenty of work to do between now and the closing table. We are here to navigate you through the next steps to help ensure things go as smoothly as possible.

CONTINGENCIES

Most offers are made subject to certain conditions. Contingencies are put in place for your protection and allow you to walk away from the contract without legal consequences. Some of these contingencies are as follows:

- Home Inspection
- Subject to Sale
- Appraisal
- Mortgage
- Subject to Closing
- Title/Abstract



INSPECTIONS

At Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors, we always advise our buyer clients to have their prospective home inspected. As part of the purchase agreement, we recommend that buyers request a whole house inspection to be completed soon after an offer is accepted. For inspector recommendations, see the Ruhl&Ruhl Preferred Vendor list at RuhlHomes.com/Vendor or ask your Realtor.

We can help you work through options to address concerns. The seller is not obligated to make any additional repairs or compensate for deficiencies; however, we will help you negotiate a satisfactory resolution.

AHS HOME WARRANTY

When you're buying a new home, you're making a major investment in your family and your future. A home protection plan can give you the reassurance of knowing you're helping to safeguard that investment. A home protection plan puts you in control of your budget with an economical way to help protect against otherwise potentially costly situations when you are buying a home. There are many reasons for you, as a homebuyer, to include an American Home Shield Home Protection Plan, or warranty, in your contract:

- Relief from some of the expenses of unexpected breakdowns on covered items
- Affordable, flexible and customizable plans
- Access to a network of service contractors
- Increased confidence in your home purchase



HOME INSURANCE - NELSON BROTHERS AGENCY



Let the Nelson Brothers Agency protect your house and your possessions with the coverage that fits you. They select homeowners insurance companies to offer you the home or condo insurance that is best suited for your needs at the lowest rate possible.

The Nelson Brothers Agency provides homeowners insurance, as well as automobile coverage, health insurance, life insurance and even business insurance, to clients in eastern Iowa and western Illinois. As an independent insurance broker, the Nelson Brothers Agency represents many reputable insurance companies – not just one. This enables them to offer their clients insurance with the company offering the best coverage and the most competitive price. They can offer you sound, impartial advice to help you obtain everything you want, including:



- Low insurance rates
- Coverage custom to your needs
- Very attentive service

For more information, visit **NelsonBrothersAgency.com**.

APPRAISAL

The appraiser will visit the property you are thinking about buying and will do a detailed study to determine its estimated value. The major elements that the appraiser uses to determine the market value are a comparison of the property to similar properties that have recently sold and will compare its condition, age, amenities and square footage. This estimate will help the underwriter determine the amount of the loan. Keep in mind the appraiser will not do a detailed inspection - that is the inspector's job.

Any offers that are subject to financing will also be subject to appraisal. This appraisal is for the bank to verify that the property is worth what they're securing the loan against. If the property fails to appraise at or above the purchase price, the bank's loan to value will be on the appraised value, not the value of the property.

UTILITY GUIDE

When you move into a home, it is important to know all of the local resources. From turning on your utilities to registering to vote, we have all of the information you need to make the first few weeks at home seamless.

Start getting connected to your new community by going to **RuhlHomes.com/Services/Utility**

AFTER CLOSING

You have a lot on your mind as you prepare to move into your new home, plan updates and get to know your new area. There are a few things you don't want to forget in all of the excitement, and we've included some helpful resources below. We are here to help you, so please don't hesitate to reach out if there is anything we can do to help you settle in.



Our goal is to make your move as easy and stress-free as possible.

Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors is proud to recommend these trusted partners who are known for their expertise and service. They have been recommended by satisfied Ruhl&Ruhl clients and associates, and have proper insurance and licenses. With these, and other resources you consider, you should be sure to compare their qualifications, fees and other references before making your final decision.

Visit **RuhlHomes.com/Vendor** to view all our service providers or contact Customer Service at 563-441-1776 or by email at CustomerService@RuhlHomes.com



CLIENT SURVEY

The Client Surveys are brochures sent to every client that closes a transaction with Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors. This feedback form allows you to explain how the real estate experience was for you, where you heard about us, how you found your agent and any comments you wish to share.

Your feedback is valued as Caroline Ruhl personally reads every survey. Information collected from these surveys gives insight into what areas Ruhl&Ruhl Realtors should be focusing on, and helps determine company service awards and our marketing.

Client Surveys are mailed out two weeks after your closing. The survey will be mailed in a bright yellow envelope. an electronic survey will be sent 30 days after closing if you prefer this option.

REAL ESTATE REVIEW

A Real Estate Review is our annual service that will be provided to you after closing. Your agent will give you updates on the market, the state of your real estate investments, and much more. As one of your largest financial investments, it is important to stay current on the value of your home.



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