



HOME *Buyer* GUIDE

A BUYER'S STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUYING A HOME

kw | KELLER WILLIAMS
HIGH COUNTRY REALTY

Rezvani
Property Group

KELLER WILLIAMS
Luxury

www.liveinthehighcountry.com

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About Us



RUTH WALKER

Having worked in real estate related fields in the Boone area since she was a student at Appalachian State University and with 18 years of exploring the trails, parks, and streams up close and personal, Ruth knows every corner of this beautiful area. As your buyer specialist she looks forward to sharing her knowledge of all that our area has to offer. Ruth & her husband feel so privileged to be able to raise their two children in a community that values natural beauty and the activities and amenities it affords them. Whether you are local or new to the High Country, let's explore the area and find the perfect property for you. Matching you with the property that best fits your needs and interests is her top priority.

NIKKI REZVANI



Nikki has been living in the High Country for 20 years...she is so grateful to live in such a beautiful place surrounded by such an inspiring and supportive community. Receiving her degree in Appropriate Tech and Building Science from App State, Nikki's educational background has become such a valuable asset to her clients. She has a strong understanding of plumbing & electrical systems, building & home construction, and renewable energy systems. She worked as the business manager at a local, structural engineering firm, gaining valuable knowledge on structural systems and what to look for when evaluating a home for her clients. During her time working for the ASU Energy Center, she worked with statewide organizations on improving and implementing home energy efficiency standards. Please use Nikki as a resource...she'd be happy to share this knowledge with you.

Having bought and sold several homes in the area herself, she understands the excitement and the nerves involved in such a big transaction. When you are an informed buyer or seller, you'll make the best decisions during these important moments. That's why she is here...she will help you through the process every step of the way. As she guides you through these steps, Nikki will offer advice, helpful tips and be fully available to answer any questions that may arise. Each one of us has our own unique situation with varying needs and she is here to listen and help you determine what will best serve your highest interests and real estate goals.

Nikki lives with her partner Steven, their 2 beautiful children(1 & 6) and two amazing stepsons(12 & 16) who keep them laughing and loving life. She enjoys exploring the High Country outdoors, making art and spending time with family and friends.

LET'S CONNECT



919.274.4280



828.773.7845



ruthwalker@kw.com



nikkirezvani@kw.com



[instagram.com/rezvanipropertygram](https://www.instagram.com/rezvanipropertygram)



[Facebook.com/rezvanipropertygroup](https://www.facebook.com/rezvanipropertygroup)

The Process

STEP 1

GET PRE-APPROVED

- Gather your financial documents
- Meet with a lender
- Obtain Pre-Approval
- Confirm you have adequate funds
- Set a budget

STEP 2

MEET WITH YOUR AGENT

- Discuss budget
- Discuss market conditions
- Research area neighborhoods
- Set wants & needs

STEP 3

FIND YOUR HOME

- Tour homes
- Adjust criteria if necessary

STEP 4

MAKE AN OFFER

- Research comps in the area
- Work with your realtor to set up the best offer
- Negotiate terms of the offer

STEP 5

UNDER CONTRACT

- All negotiations are finished
- Both parties have signed contract
- Deposit earnest money & send Due Diligence Fee

STEP 6

DUE DILIGENCE

- Professional Inspections
- Discover repair items
- Negotiate repairs and/or contract terms
- Obtain homeowners insurance

STEP 7

APPRAISAL

- Professional appraiser ensures the property is worth the contracted sales price; ordered by lender

STEP 8

TITLE COMMITMENT

- The title company will send you a title insurance policy for the property after closing

STEP 9

DOCUMENTS TO LENDER

- Make sure all requested docs are sent to your lender prior to closing

STEP 10

CLOSING

- Wire final closing funds
- Final walk-through
- Sign closing documents
- Receive your keys



The Costs Of Buying A Home

EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT:

The initial amount you "put down" to secure a home. This ranges from 1% to 5% and is subtracted from your final down payment. This is typically cashed and held at the closing attorney's office.

DUE DILIGENCE FEE:

This fee is paid directly to the seller and is non-refundable. It gives the seller compensation for taking the home off the market as you inspect the property and finalize lending during your due diligence period. This fee goes towards the purchase price of the property; it is variable based on the purchase price and market competition.

INSPECTIONS:

Home inspections are important when buying a home. We want to find out all there is to know about the home and its condition. A general home inspection is a must, but you can also select many other types of inspections including termite / pest inspection, radon inspection, water inspection (if well water), septic inspection (if on-site septic), etc.

APPRAISAL:

All homes that have a mortgage will require an appraisal to ensure that you are buying a home that is not overpriced. An appraisal is done strictly for the lender and costs between \$600 - \$1000. This will be paid upfront in most cases. Speak to your lender directly to find out if they require payment up front.

DOWN PAYMENT:

This is not due in full until closing day! Typically ranging from 3.5% (with an FHA loan) to 20%, and everywhere in between! You will be able to discuss the specifics of your loan with your lender to find out exactly how much of a down payment will be required.

CLOSING COSTS:

Closing costs are the fees that are needed to close and get keys for your new home — such as lender fees, transfer tax, escrow (including your taxes), reimbursements, and homeowners insurance. Closing costs typically range from 3%-5% of the purchase price of the home.

GENERAL HOME INSPECTION:

\$450+ (DEPENDS ON SQUARE FEET)

RADON:

\$225

PEST:

\$100-\$150

WATER:

\$225-\$300

ON-SITE SEPTIC (IF APPLICABLE):

\$750

***THESE ARE AVERAGE COSTS AND VARY DEPENDING ON THE INSPECTION COMPANY USED**



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The Mortgage Process

The very first step of the home buying process is to get a pre-approval letter from a lender stating the amount for which you are pre-approved. A pre-approval letter is typically only valid for 30-90 days as long as no major financial changes have occurred in your life.

QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL LENDERS:

1. What type of loan do you recommend for me and why? There are multiple types of mortgage loans, and you should know which one is best for you and how it works. The lender can help break this all down in easy terms for you to understand, and will be here alongside us in the journey to help answer any questions that come up that pertain to the home loan.
2. Will my down payment vary based on the loan I choose? If you're tight on cash or don't want to be cash poor, let your lender know. Loans vary in their down payment requirements, and no two scenarios are the same. The lender is there to put the puzzle pieces together, and come up with a plan that will work for you and your financial scenario so it is best to be completely transparent with them from the beginning.
3. What is the interest rate and the annual percentage rate (APR)? Everyone talks about the interest rate, but the APR is just as important. It combines the interest rate with the fees a lender charges to originate your loan. It is the full cost of financing a home.
4. Can I lock in the interest rate? If so, for how long? If you think rates will be moving up, ask if you can lock it in for a set period of time. Some lenders have extended rate lock options.
5. What will my closing costs be? Are they a part of my loan, or will I pay them in cash at closing? Can I take a higher interest rate and use a lender credit to help cover my closing costs? Closing costs usually run 3-5% of your loan value so you need to know how they'll be covered. Sometimes we can also negotiate with the seller to help cover a portion of your closing costs, depending on the market conditions.

RECOMMENDED LENDERS

YOU MAY USE THE LENDER OF YOUR CHOICE. THESE ARE A FEW THAT I KNOW AND TRUST.



MOVEMENT MORTGAGE
ANGELA MCLEAN
828-964-0260
ANGELA.MCLEAN@MOVEMENT.COM



KELLER MORTGAGE
MIKE TRIPODI
614-286-3238
MTRIPODI@KELLERMORTGAGE.COM



SOUTHERN TRUST MORTGAGE
PAT MCGUIRE
(828) 341-2950
PMCGUIRE@SOUTHERNTRUST.COM



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Do's & Don'ts Of The Loan Process



There are certain “Dos and Don’ts” of the home loan process which may affect the outcome of the ability to purchase a home. These remain in effect before, during, and after loan approval up until the day of funding your loan and closing. Many times credit, income, and assets are verified days or hours before you have signed your final loan documents.

THE DON'TS:

- Don't buy a new vehicle
- Don't get married or divorced
- Don't change professions or start your own business
- Don't change bank accounts
- Don't buy ANYTHING! (appliances, furniture, etc.)
- Don't co-sign a loan for ANYBODY else
- Don't throw away documents
- Don't be late paying monthly bills or incur any late payments
- Don't let anyone run your credit or apply for any credit cards
- Don't pay off any old debts unless instructed to do so by your lender

THE DOS:

- Do keep all accounts current, including mortgage, car loans, credit cards, etc.
- Do contact your lender anytime a question may arise
- Do make all payments on or before due dates on all accounts, even if the account is being paid off with your new loan
- Do return phone calls from your agent, loan officer, Settlement Company, or anyone else involved in your transaction ASAP! TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE !



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Home Search

Once you have your finances in order, the house hunt officially begins!

I will set you up on an automatic search through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which is the database that Realtors use to list and search for homes. The moment a home that fits your search criteria is listed for sale, it will be sent directly to your email inbox. If I ever need to adjust the search criteria, just let me know and I can make any changes you need.

some quick tips

- **Use search filters but not too much.**

You don't want to narrow your search so much that you only have a handful of homes to view. Keeping your wants vs. needs list in mind and expanding your geographic search will allow for more options.

- **If you find something that catches your eye, it's a good idea to do a drive-by first.**

Online pictures can be deceiving so driving through the area will give you a better sense of the neighborhood, area, and if it's a home you want to view.

- **Remember, you can't change the size of lot or the location.**

Location, location, location! Consider this when purchasing.

- **Don't let yourself get distracted by the home decor or staging.**

While the decor or furniture may be attractive, these things may or may not come with the home. Try to stay focused on the floor plan and condition of the home.

- **Consider your options, but don't get analysis paralysis.**

If a home makes a good first impression, make sure you write down all of the reasons why you love that home. This is one of the largest purchases you'll ever make. Of course you want to make the right decision; however, if you take too much time making a decision, another buyer may swoop in and get the property under contract.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SEARCHING FOR A HOME

1. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?
2. IS THERE A SPECIFIC SCHOOL DISTRICT YOU'D LIKE TO BE IN?
3. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN NEW CONSTRUCTION OR AN EXISTING HOME?
4. WHAT STYLE HOME WOULD YOU PREFER?
5. ARE STAIRS ACCEPTABLE?
6. DO YOU WANT A GARAGE?
7. WHAT SIZE LOT AND BACKYARD WOULD YOU PREFER?
8. DOES IT MATTER IF YOU ARE IN AN HOA?
9. DOES HAVING A BASEMENT OR THIRD FLOOR MATTER?
10. WHAT FEATURES OF A HOME ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?



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Offer & Negotiations

So you've found "the one" and you're ready to put in an offer—let's go over the basics!

IN ORDER TO WRITE AN OFFER, YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- **PRE-APPROVAL LETTER AND PROOF OF FUNDS**

Include a pre-approval letter that shows that you're serious, pre-approved, and ready to purchase.

- **OFFER PRICE**

I will help you determine the property's market value based on comparable sales. You may only get one shot, so make it count. We will use comparable sales as a guide, but go in with a strong number and terms that a seller would find favorable.

- **EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT**

This is typically 1-5% of the purchase price.

- **FINANCING AMOUNT**

What percentage of the purchase price are you financing, and how much cash are you putting down?

- **CLOSING DATE**

If getting a mortgage, this is typically 30-45 days from acceptance of the offer. This will be the day the deed to the home is recorded in your name and keys are handed over. It is courteous to ask the sellers what their preferred settlement date is.

- **DUE DILIGENCE PERIOD | INSPECTIONS**

This time period is set by you in the offer (typically 2-4 weeks). This is when inspections are performed. We may renegotiate or terminate the contract if the inspection report reveals unacceptable problems. The appraisal report should also be returned during this period because NC does not have separate lending contingencies.



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Inspections

During the inspection period, the buyer has the right to hire a professional to inspect the condition of the home. The inspection will uncover any issues in the home that would have otherwise been unknown. I always recommend having a home inspection done. Even on new construction!

The standard home inspector's report will cover the condition of the home's heating system, central air conditioning system; interior plumbing and electrical systems; the roof, attic, and visible insulation; walls, ceilings, floors, windows, and doors; the foundation, basement and structural components. You will receive a written report of the inspection, *but I recommend you attend the last 30 minutes of the inspection to go over any findings with the inspector.*

ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS YOU MAY NEED:

- **RADON INSPECTION** - Radon gas is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer in the US. It is a naturally occurring gas that is colorless and odorless and can only be detected with a radon meter.
- **TERMITE INSPECTION** - Ask your lender if your loan requires particular inspections such as a Wood Destroying Organism (WDO) inspection.
- **WELL WATER / SEPTIC INSPECTION** - If the home has a septic system or well water, it is important to make sure that the water is not contaminated and that the septic system is working properly with no leaks or breaks in the lines or septic tank.

MY RECOMMENDED INSPECTORS CALL FOR QUOTES



WARRIOR HOME
INSPECTIONS
JOHNNY HAMM

WARRIORHOMEINSPECTIONS.COM
WARRIORHOMEINSPECTIONS@GMAIL.COM

RIDGELINE
HOME INSPECTIONS

RIDGELINE HOME
INSPECTIONS
AARON MESSER

RIDGELINEINSPECTOR.COM
AMESSER5@YAHOO.COM



AQUATECH SERVICE &
CONSULTING
STEVEN FINCH

WWW.AQUATSC.COM
AQUATSC@GMAIL.COM



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Homeowners Insurance

Homeowner's insurance is always required when you are financing a home. Depending on if your house is in a flood zone, or potential flood zone, flood insurance may also be required. Always discuss all your options and quotes with your insurance agents. Below are different types of insurance you may need along with a few insurance agents that my clients have worked with before.

HOMEOWNERS

Covers loss due to disasters, theft and accidents.

FLOOD

Protects against damage caused by a flood. If you are near a flood zone, it may be worth while to get flood insurance even if it is not required.

HAZARD

Protects against damage caused by fires, severe storms, hail/sleet, earthquakes or other natural events.

WIND

Protects against damage caused by events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, or gales.

MY TRUSTED INSURANCE AGENTS

CALL FOR QUOTES



GEICO
MATTHEW YOUNG
MYOUNG@GEICO.COM
(336) 852-7283



FARM BUREAU
CAMERON SMITH
CAMERON.SMITH@NCFBINS.COM
(828) 264-5270



GRANITE
PJ HENNESSEY
PHENNESSEY@GRANITEINSURANCE.COM
(828) 212-4426



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Preparing For Closing

TITLE

The title company will conduct a title search to ensure the property is legitimate and find out if there are any outstanding mortgages, liens, judgments, restrictions, easements, leases, unpaid taxes, or any other restrictions that would impact your ownership associated with the property. Once the title is found to be "clear," the title company will issue a title Insurance policy that protects lenders and owners against claims or legal fees that may arise over ownership of the property. This is required when obtaining a mortgage and is highly recommended even if you are paying cash. This will also be a part of your closing costs, and the fees are state-regulated, which means every title company will charge the same amount for title insurance, making it easier for you because you don't need to "shop around!"

"CLEAR TO CLOSE" IS EXCELLENT NEWS!

This means the mortgage underwriter has officially approved all documentation required to fund the loan. All that remains is the actual closing process. When we hear "CLEAR TO CLOSE," that doesn't mean you are free to go out and start financing new appliances, and new cars. You still need to wait until after closing to make any other large purchases.

FINAL WALK-THROUGH

We will perform a final walkthrough the day of settlement to confirm that the seller made the repairs that were agreed upon and to make sure no issues have come up while under contract.

closing checklist

- TRANSFER ALL UTILITIES INTO YOUR NAME (GAS, ELECTRIC, WATER, SEWER, ETC.)
- REVIEW THE CLOSING SETTLEMENT STATEMENT A FEW DAYS BEFORE CLOSING
- COMPLETE FINAL WALK-THROUGH
- GET CERTIFIED BANK CHECK MADE OUT TO THE CLOSING ATTORNEY
- BRING YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE OR PASSPORT TO THE CLOSING TABLE
- SIGN ALL CLOSING DOCUMENTS AND WAIT FOR THE PROPERTY TO RECORD IN YOUR NAME
- HURRAY! POP THE CHAMPAGNE, YOU ARE A HOME OWNER!**



Moving Checklist

4-6 WEEKS BEFORE

- Declutter, discard & donate
- Collect quotes from moving companies
- Locate schools, healthcare providers in your new location
- Secure off-site storage if needed
- Choose a mover and sign contract
- Create a file of moving-related papers and receipts
- Contact homeowner's insurance agent about coverage for moving
- Contact insurance companies to arrange for coverage in new home

3-4 WEEKS BEFORE

- Notify the following about your change of address:
 - Banks + Post Office
 - Credit Card Companies
 - Insurance Companies
 - Lawyer + Financial Advisor
 - Magazine Subscriptions
 - Family + Friends
- Notify utility companies of date to discontinue/ transfer service
 - Electric
 - Water
 - Trash
 - Gas
 - Internet
 - TV

2-3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Notify DMV of new address
- Discontinue additional home services (housekeeper, gardener/lawn service)
- Start using up things you can't move, such as perishables
- Close/open bank accounts
- Arrange for child and pet care on moving day
- Notify HOA about upcoming move

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Confirm final arrangements
- Arrange transportation for your pets and plants
- Review your moving-day plan with moving company
- Take a picture in your home
- Pack an essentials box for quick access at new home
- Label moving boxes with the contents inside



General Info

REASONS WHY NOT TO CALL THE AGENT ON THE YARD SIGN

The listing agent has a fiduciary duty to the seller by signing a contract with them first; you as a buyer **are a second interest**. If you went to court, would you use the other person's attorney? Of course not! It is the same exact same situation when you are buying a home. You want an agent representing YOUR best interest and negotiating and advocating for you. No matter what real estate company a home for sale is listed with, I have the ability to show you that home and write up any offers.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

It is a similar scenario when buying a new home. The new home sales rep has the builder's best interest at heart and represents the builder. Additionally, I can often negotiate better terms or upgrades that the builders do not tell buyers about because the builder's sales rep has the builder's best interest and profit in mind, not yours. I can also recommend which upgrades to do now with the builder, and what would make more sense to do after you move in. I am also happy to recommend vendors who can do upgraded work post closing, for less costs than the builder will charge.

FORECLOSURE/BANK-OWNED PROPERTIES

Though many foreclosed homes are perceived as an excellent investment due to lower than average pricing, there are a few issues to consider. Many foreclosed homes are in a rough condition due to previous owners being forced out of their homes. With this in mind, the properties are rarely left in "move-in" condition and are always sold "as-is" with an extremely rare chance to have the home fixed prior to purchase. Just because you found the listing online as a pre-foreclosure doesn't mean that it actually ever hit the market. Sometimes those homeowners are refinancing, get caught up with their payment, or the home gets sold for cash at an auction. If a foreclosure home is for sale on the market, I still can help represent you in the purchase of that home. You do not have to bid online on your own.

WHY HIRE ME AS YOUR AGENT ?

- I will advise and negotiate on your behalf through our offer strategy to ensure you get the best deal or to have your offer accepted in a multiple-offer situation
- I will perform a free market evaluation prior to writing any offers to ensure you are comfortable with our offer strategy
- I can connect you with lenders who have financing options for buyers, including down payment assistance and low down payment programs
- I conduct "reverse prospecting" to proactively go after sellers looking to sell the specific type of property you are looking for
- I will update searches in the multiple listing service so that you get the most up-to-date homes and do not miss any opportunities
- I use e-signing for all contracts and offers in order to get an offer submitted quickly and efficiently
- I have an extensive referral network to help give you the best deal and any discounts when it comes to the maintenance and long term care of your new home
- I love to celebrate this incredible milestone with my clients. I can't wait to celebrate with you too!



Reviews

Ruth was an absolute pleasure to work with. We were first time home buyers and Ruth kept us from getting overwhelmed and made the stressful process of searching for and buying a home as smooth as possible. She also went above and beyond doing research to help us understand a confusing deed and property lines, and gave great advice throughout the process. We were looking at houses built in the 70s or earlier because of our price point, and she was full of helpful knowledge about things to look out for and important things to keep in mind for resale. We are so happy with our new home, and so thankful to Ruth for helping us get here! -Jessica M

I am so excited to write this review of Ruth Walker. She was my buyer's agent on my first home and I was so thankful to have her in my corner. The market is so tough right now but she helped me navigate it with ease. I'm a first-time homebuyer, moving from out of state, recently graduated school with a new job that I haven't started yet and a limited budget. The odds were not in my favor to find a house but Ruth not only helped me find my dream home she taught me the process, was there for me every step of the way, and advocated on my behalf to help me get the best deal I could. My parents hope to retire here soon and we will absolutely be using Ruth again when we find their retirement home. High recommend, you can't do better than Ruth Walker. -Jason K

I have never been so willing and happy to review someone as I am right now. Ruth Walker is a stellar human. I am fortunate to know her personally which is exactly why I wanted her to be my realtor. Ruth is calm, level-headed, kind, respectful, and a great communicator. She possesses that rare and brilliant blend of being graceful and positive while also being strong and trustworthy. Ruth is extremely knowledgeable about all facets of home value and purchase. On the occasions she was unsure of something, she knew exactly where to find a quick and effective answer. Ruth nudged all the people involved in my home purchase as needed to keep the process moving. She lives and works with consistent integrity. Please do yourself the favor of allowing Ruth to facilitate the purchase of your next home. I am so grateful I did.

-Meredith P

Ruth is fantastic! She helped us navigate a tricky market to find our dream property, and gave us awesome advice that saved us money. We will definitely be repeat customers when we buy or sell our next high country property! -Adam D

