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Congratulations on starting your home search!! Below are some of the helpful steps in the process of finding a home. We will be completing all of these steps together and I will be helping you as we go. During this process if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at any time.

- **GET PRE-APPROVED WITH A LENDER.** A pre-approval is the first step in determining just how much of a home you can comfortably purchase and a good lender can help you de-mystify this somewhat confusing step. This is your chance to discuss your financing options and decide whether or not you want to go FHA, Conventional, VA, cash, or other. Choosing a good lender is one of the most important steps in your real estate process since a lender can often make or break your escrow. I am more than happy to give you some names of lenders we've worked with during successful transactions. Otherwise, work with a lender you know will treat you well and work responsibly! We always recommend you speak with more than 1 lender before getting pre-approved so you can test their communication style and shop for rates. Please be aware that your credit is impacted each time your credit is pulled – so be sure to minimize the number of lenders who pull your credit report! You will need a pre-approval letter from the lender you choose to submit a strong offer on the home you find.
- **DEFINE YOUR SEARCH CRITERIA.** This is your chance to sit down with your realtor and talk about what you want in a home. Consider all the factors that are important to you including proximity to work, school districts for children, security of the neighborhood, etc. Start a “would love to have” and a “would like to have” list and share it with your realtor. What city do you want to live in? How many bedrooms do you need? Baths? What features are you looking for? A pool? A three car garage? Are you looking for a fixer or something that is more move-in ready? You may not be able to find a home that meets ALL your search criteria, but we'll definitely try our best!
- **THE PORTAL SEARCH.** Once I know what you're looking for, I'll set up an internet search portal for you that will email you listings that match your search criteria. The portal will list all relevant information about the properties such as bedrooms, price, acreage, etc, and include any photos that are on MLS. It's a great way to sort through the photos of homes and choose the ones you want to view. Once you have one or more you'd like to view, let's go! I will also be monitoring your portal and I will call you if I see anything that I think you may find interesting. Your search can be updated or changed at any time! Please know that time is of the essence. If you see a house you're interested in, please call me immediately. Great homes that are priced right often get offers within the first 24 hours. If you hesitate, an offer may get accepted – it happens all the time!
- **TYPES OF LISTINGS.** There are several types of listings you will come across in MLS and also see in your internet portal. The main categories you will come across include:
 - **ACTIVE** – This category includes regular sellers (ie, selling for profit) and bank owned (REO) homes. These properties typically can close quickly without the hassle of dealing with a short sell negotiator. If you're looking to move quickly, I'd recommend focusing primarily on these “ACTIVE” sellers.
 - **ACTIVE SHORT SALE** - This category includes homes where the seller is attempting to sell the home at a loss to their bank or lender, under the value they purchased the home for or currently owe on the property. Short sales can close in as short as 45 days, or may close never! They're a big mystery and the final answer is up to the bank or lender. We can do homework and ask several questions to gauge the possibility of the home closing, but these could be a very challenging and drawn out process.
 - **ACTIVE SHORT SALE CONTINGENT** – This category is similar to “ACTIVE SHORT SALE” but these homes already have an offer on them which is currently pending with the bank or lender. Agents do not typically show these while they are contingent because the agents have worked hard and long towards a successful transaction. If the offer falls through, the property will revert to “ACTIVE SHORT SALE” and I'd be more than happy to show you the home!
 - **PENDING** – This category is for homes that are in escrow with a working offer. Not worth our time to visit & view.

- **SOLD** – These listings are over and done – kaput! Sold!
- **VISITING PROPERTIES.** This is the fun part! Choose a date and time you are available to see the properties you found in your portal. If the properties are occupied, I will make an appointment for our viewing. If it's vacant, we can go at any time!
- **FINDING A HOME YOU LIKE.** Once you find a home you like, I will take a quick moment or two to do some homework. We will look at the prices of the sales and listings of the neighborhood to make sure the offer you make is at market value. We will look at the trends to make sure your investment is a wise choice and the market is not still decreasing for this area. I will call the listing agent to see if there's anything we should know prior to submitting an offer. I will also let the listing agent know that he/she should expect an offer and not accept one until they see ours by later that evening!
- **MAKING AN OFFER.** Once we've discussed the property and the market conditions and market price, we're ready to make an offer! We'll sit down and go over several documents that make up your offer including a purchase agreement, agency disclosure, and other forms. I prefer to go through every point of each of the documents during your first offer so you completely understand what you are signing...this may take a few hours. Any future offers will be much easier and take considerably less time to write up. Your purchase offer should be accompanied by a pre-approval letter from your lender (specific to the property in question) and your good faith deposit check which is usually 1% of the purchase price (made out to "_____ Title Company"). If you are purchasing in cash, the offer will need to be accompanied by proof of funds (with your confidential information removed).
- **OFFER ACCEPTANCE.** After your offer has been submitted, your offer will be accepted, countered, or rejected. If your offer is countered, it is up to you if you choose to accept the counter offer or write up a second counter offer with new terms. Hopefully your offer will be accepted and you'll officially be in escrow! Check out the next document for the steps to a successful escrow!

If you ever have any questions or concerns call me! I'm here to help!

I look forward to walking you through all these steps,
Lauren