

RS
RAGONA SISTERS

Buyers GUIDE

Your GUIDE to Homeownership



“A home is a place where
memories are made and
dreams are realized”
- Unknown -





The Road Home

You've heard it before: buying a home may be the largest purchase you will ever make. Does that make you nervous? Consider this: it can also be one of the best investments you will ever make.

From the pride you feel by being a homeowner to the tax deductions associated with home ownership, the benefits are plenty. If you're ready to travel the road toward home ownership, take your first step with the Ragona Sisters Home Buyer's Guide.

This guide is a resource to help familiarize you with the home-buying process, and present you with relevant information, including a list of terms, things to consider when choosing a home, and a checklist to help you make the right decisions for you.



OUR FAMILY

Helping Yours
One  at a time!



3

Sisters

2

**Generations
of Experience**

1

**Trusted
Name**





TIPS FOR CHOOSING A REAL ESTATE AGENT

- **Choose someone you trust:** A home is very intimate, very expensive purchase. It's critical that you feel comfortable and that your concerns are addressed and your views are respected
- **Look for experience:** We are Experienced, full-time real estate professionals who have experienced market ups and downs, and will know how to navigate current conditions.
- **Do your Due Diligence:** Research us online. Read our reviews
- **Undivided attention:** While you want lots of experience, ask how we will serve you. Let us know what you expect from us. We are here to serve you, and make you happy!

Why Choose Us

Whether you were moving across town or across the country, the real estate market is a big place and the Ragona Sisters Team can help you navigate it. We have the access to current market information and can help you make informed decisions about the areas and properties that interest you. As we move through the process, we can walk you through confusing paperwork and, of course, assist you in house hunting.



Understanding *Agency Relationship* in Real Estate

The connection between a real estate brokerage and a client is referred to as an "agency" and can be categorized into three types of agency relationships:



Sellers Representation

A seller's agent works exclusively for the seller, prioritizing their best interests. They disclose information about buyers, protect confidentiality, and establish a contract for services and fees.



Buyer Representation

A buyer's agent exclusively represents and works in the best interests of the buyer. A written agreement, known as a buyer representation agreement, establishes this relationship and sets clear fees and responsibilities. It's a way to ensure the buyer receives dedicated support and guidance from a trusted professional.



Multiple Representation

In some cases, a real estate brokerage may represent both the buyer and the seller. However, this requires written consent from both parties. The realtor has the obligation to disclose all relevant information to both the buyer and the seller in a timely and complete manner. Representation agreements outline the rights, duties, and any limitations for everyone involved in the transaction.



THE RIGHT
REAL ESTATE TEAM
every step of the way



Get PRE-APPROVED

Obtaining a pre-approved mortgage provides the assurance of knowing your budget and potential down payment before beginning your home search. It offers protection against interest rate fluctuations during your house hunting period, giving you peace of mind as you look for your new home.

Our in-house mortgage specialists have direct access to a vast network of over 50+ lenders, enabling us to offer competitive rates. With smooth and seamless communication, your information will be securely shared, alleviating unnecessary stress. Expect quick responses and prompt access to answers to common questions such as:

- Should I buy or sell my property first?
- What is the ideal amortization period for my mortgage?
- Should I choose a fixed or variable mortgage?
- Is an open or closed mortgage more suitable for my situation?
- What strategies can I use to become mortgage-free faster?

Start YOUR HOME SEARCH

As a home buyer, you can expect to see an array of different home styles and designs. You've got the choice of single-family, condo, townhome, lakefront, acreage, luxury; you can also choose bungalow, multi-storey, or split-level. In addition, you can choose a pre-existing home or new construction. In other words – you've got options. But what's most important is that you choose a home that complements your lifestyle and your income.

To narrow down your choices...

- Know your budget and stick to it.
 - Determine a desired location.
 - Consider how many bedrooms, bathrooms & square feet you need.
 - Decide which amenities are must-haves versus like-to-haves.
 - Consider your needs for outdoor space, like a yard or balcony.
-

Once you've identified your must-haves, ask the Ragona Sisters Team to send you listings that meet your criteria via email, text message or social media. We will coordinate showings for properties you'd like to see in person.



Online HOUSE HUNTING

When it comes to house hunting online, there are lots of things a potential buyer can do to get a feel for a property by simply utilizing the tools that are available online. Real Estate Agents, like ourselves, are a great resource to lean on, as they often have lots of information on the property that may not be included in the MLS listing description.

Here's What to Watch Out For...

▶ THE PHOTOS

Make sure you take a look at all of the photos and spend some time noting where windows are and what the natural light is like in the space. Another good thing to consider when looking through the photos is how your own furniture will look in the space. If the photos of the home are furniture free, allow yourself to mentally place furniture where you think it may look best. If the property is staged, take into consideration where different furniture pieces are placed and how you could change the furniture layout to work for you and your style.



▶ THE CONDITION

If you're looking at a property online that may not be quite your style or that needs some upgrades, take note of those. See what elements of the homework for you and which areas you would consider renovating or giving some TLC in the future. And remember, paint colour is an easy, relatively inexpensive change that makes a huge difference in a home!



HOME STYLES



STOREY-AND-A-HALF

This style has a deep pitched roof and clean, simple design. Dormers can be added to a pitched roof to add windows or usable space on the upper level



TOWNHOUSE

An owned unit in a row of houses all attached to one another. Often has an condominium fee that covers shared monthly expenses for the upkeep of the exterior and any shared facilities



SPLIT LEVEL

Also called a split entry, this home style typically has two short sets of stairs running up and down from the point of entry. It may, or may not, have living space at entry level



SEMI-DETACHED

This home has two single family dwellings that are separated by one common wall and have mirror image layouts. Semi detached homes typically have two separate street addresses and can be owned by two different homeowners. Since outdoor maintenance is the responsibility of the homeowners, it is important to consider shared expenses that may need to be addressed such as house siding and windows as well use and upkeep of common spaces such as the yard, landscape or a shared driveway



SINGLE LEVEL

Also referred to as a bungalow is known for a long, low design with all or most living space on ground level. Many have a basement level which may be finished into additional living space. A lower level walk-out includes a door to the exterior



CONDOMINIUM

An owned unit in a large property complex that consists of many individual units. Often has a fee that covers shared monthly expenses for the upkeep of the building and facilities



TWO-STOREY HOME

A two-storey home has two full levels of living space. A traditional two storey will have a ground level, with an often equal sized floor directly above. Often you will find living space on the ground level, with the main suite and additional bedrooms on the second floor. There may also be a basement level



DUPLEX

An owned unit in a row of houses all attached to one another. Often has an condominium fee that covers shared monthly expenses for the upkeep of the exterior and any shared facilities

CHECKLIST

Bedrooms: ☐ 2+ ☐ 3+ ☐ 4+

Bathrooms: ☐ 1+ ☐ 2+ ☐ 3+ ☐ 4+

Dedicated Office Space: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Central Air Conditioning: ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐

☐

Garage: ☐ 1-car ☐ 2-car ☐ 3+ car

☐ Attached ☐ Detached ☐ None

☐

☐

Kitchen Features:

☐ Gas Stove/Cooktop ☐ Gas Oven

☐ Microwave ☐ Dishwasher

☐ Walk-In Pantry ☐ Eat-In Kitchen

☐ Updated Countertops

☐ Fully Renovated

☐

☐

Bedroom Features:

☐ Walk-in closet ☐ Master Bathroom

☐

☐

Bathroom Features:

☐ Double Vanity and Sinks

☐ Bathtub ☐ Double Shower

☐

☐

Additional Indoor Features:

☐ Gas Fireplace ☐ Wood Fireplace

☐ Mudroom ☐ Main Level Laundry

☐ Alarm System ☐ Smart-Home Tech.

☐ Mounted TV or Sound System Wiring

☐ Dedicated Dining Room

☐ Basement

☐

☐

Outdoor Features:

☐ Yard Space ☐ Wooded Lot ☐ Balcony

☐ Pool ☐ Fence ☐ Shed

☐ Balcony or Deck

☐ Outdoor Entertaining Area

☐

☐



IT'S TIME TO GO *Shopping*

As you embark on the journey of searching for your dream home, allow us, the experts, to share some valuable tips to guide you along the way



FIRST IMPRESSIONS AREN'T EVERYTHING!

Sellers often invest in staging their homes to create a visually appealing home. However, it's important to look beyond the decor and consider the true value of the property as an investment. We will assist you in seeing past the surface and evaluating the property based on its actual potential



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Selecting the best home from similar options in different locations can be challenging. It's essential to evaluate factors like amenities, property value, lifestyle impact, and future development potential. Our experienced team is committed to providing professional guidance, assisting you in making an informed decision that suits your unique needs and preferences



THE IN'S AND OUT'S OF *Viewing Properties*

When visiting people's homes during the homebuying process, it's essential to adhere to certain ground rules and etiquette. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- **Respect privacy:** Remember that you are entering someone's personal space. Respect their privacy and treat the property with care and consideration.
- **Schedule appointments:** Always schedule appointments in advance with the homeowner or listing agent. Avoid showing up unannounced, as it can be intrusive and disruptive.
- **Be punctual:** Arrive on time for your scheduled appointments. Being punctual shows respect for the homeowner's time and allows for a smoother experience.
- **Remove shoes or use booties:** Inquire about the homeowner's preference regarding shoes. Some may request that you remove your shoes or wear provided booties to protect their floors and carpets.
- **Handle property with care:** Treat the property as if it were your own. Be mindful of touching or moving personal belongings and avoid causing any damage.
- **Follow instructions:** If the homeowner or listing agent provides specific instructions or guidelines, such as not entering certain rooms or areas, be sure to comply.
- **Keep conversations discreet:** Avoid discussing sensitive topics or making negative comments about the property while inside. Be respectful and mindful of your conversations.
- **Limit the number of people:** If possible, bring only the necessary individuals involved in the homebuying decision. Excessive visitors can be overwhelming and make it difficult for everyone to move comfortably within the space.
- **Ask permission for photography or video:** If you want to take photos or videos of the property, seek permission from the homeowner or listing agent beforehand. Respect any restrictions they may have.
- **Provide feedback professionally:** After the visit, if you have any feedback or concerns about the property, communicate them respectfully and professionally through your real estate agent or appropriate channels.

By following these ground rules, you demonstrate respect for the homeowner and create a positive experience during your home visits.



5 ELEMENT OF A *Winning* OFFER

1 PRICE

Offering a price that is competitive and aligned with the current market value of the property is crucial. It shows that you are serious and committed to the purchase

2 DEPOSIT

Higher deposits in an offer demonstrate the buyer's seriousness, commitment, and financial stability, making it an appealing element of a successful offer

3 IRREVOCABLE

This provides a clear timeframe for the seller to respond, ensuring efficient negotiations and decision-making, utilizing a length of time to get the desired acceptance

4 CONDITIONS

Few or Favorable Conditions:
Reducing the number of conditions or presenting a firm offer will increase its attractiveness. Sellers prefer offers with fewer obstacles and potential complications, such as inspection or financing conditions, making your offer more appealing in their eyes

5 CLOSING DATE

Flexible closing timelines can be enticing to sellers with varying needs. Shorter closings accommodate those looking for a quick transition, while longer closings suit sellers who are actively searching for their next home. Adapting the closing timeline to the seller's situation can make your offer more appealing

It's important to remember that each real estate transaction is unique, and the factors that make an offer attractive can vary. Working with the Ragona Sisters Team, you will receive expert guidance and support in making an offer that sets you apart from the competition and maximizes your chances of success in a competitive market

A TEAM
YOU CAN,
count on!





THE OFFER JOURNEY

NAVIGATING *Different* SCENERIOS

In Ontario, there are several types of offers commonly used in real estate transactions. Here are some of the main ones:

01

FIRM OFFER

A firm offer is a straightforward and unconditional offer to purchase a property at the specified price and terms. If accepted by the seller, it becomes a legally binding contract

02

CONDITIONAL OFFER

A conditional offer includes certain conditions that must be met for the offer to be binding. Common conditions include financing, home inspection, or the sale of the buyer's existing property. If any of the conditions are not satisfied, the offer can be nullified

03

MULTIPLE OFFERS

In a competitive market, multiple buyers may submit offers on the same property simultaneously. The seller can choose to accept one offer, negotiate with multiple buyers, or request a highest and best offer from all interested parties

04

BULLY OFFER

A bully offer, also known as a pre-emptive offer, is an offer submitted by a buyer before the specified offer presentation date. It is typically higher than the expected offers, aiming to secure the property before others have a chance to submit their offers

05

COUNTER-OFFER

If a seller does not accept the terms of a buyer's offer, they may respond with a counter-offer. A counteroffer proposes different terms, such as a higher price, different closing date, or revised conditions. The buyer can then accept, reject, or counter the counter-offer



Offer *Accepted* Now What?

Exciting news! Your offer has been accepted. Between now and closing, you will need to interact with many reliable experts along the way such as:

- Mortgage Agent
- Home Inspector
- Home Appraiser
- Lawyer
- Insurance Agent
- Moving Company
- Contractor
- Landscaper

Government Incentives & Rebates

The Government of Canada offers a number of financial incentives to help you throughout the home buying journey. Incentives for first-time buyers, tax credits, rebates and other programs are available. Find out which incentives might be right for you.

PROTECTING YOUR PURCHASE

Get a Home Inspection: Inspections generally cost a few hundred dollars but will bring to light any major issues or concerns with the home. The Purchase Agreement can be conditional on the outcome of the inspection, so if you don't like what you find you can withdraw the offer and keep looking

Purchase Home Insurance: You are required to purchase homeowners insurance if you have a mortgage. Make sure you purchase enough to fully cover your home, and your belongings, in case of a total loss

Purchase Title Insurance: It is an insurance policy that protects you, as the property owner, against losses related to the property's title or ownership. It's a one-time fee that is purchased through your lawyer on closing. It covers you for unknown title defects, existing liens, any encroachment issues, errors in surveys, title fraud and other title related issues that may affect your ability to sell, mortgage, or lease your property in the future



WHAT BUYERS *Pay For*

In addition to the actual purchase price of the home, there are various other costs and expenses that you may need to budget for during different stages of the buying process:

After Offer is Accepted:

- Home Inspection (Payable at Time of Inspection)
- Appraisal (Payable Prior to Inspection or through Lender)

At Closing:

- Legal Fees, Disbursements and Title and Mortgage Registration
- Land Transfer Tax
- Mortgage Interest Adjustments (if applicable) and/or discharge fees from Lender
- Mortgage Insurance
- Home Insurance
- Title Insurance

On Moving Day:

- Connection Charges for Utilities
- Moving Expenses

DID YOU KNOW?

**Using a Real Estate
Agent to Buy a
Home Won't Cost
You Anything**



FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS *Programs*

First-Time Home Buyers Government Equity Incentive

This incentive offers eligible buyers the opportunity to make homeownership more accessible by:

1. Share in the equity of their new property
2. Reducing monthly mortgage payments
3. Potentially lowering the required down payment

This shared-equity mortgage program offered by the Government of Canada provides:

- 5% or 10% for a first-time buyer's purchase of a newly constructed home
- 5% for a first-time buyer's purchase of a resale (existing) home
- 5% for a first-time buyer's purchase of a new or resale mobile/manufactured home

The government has a shared investment in the home. As a result, the government shares in both the upside and downside of the property value

First-Time Home Buyers Land Transfer Tax

Land transfer tax rebates can be a valuable benefit for first-time homebuyers, helping to reduce their overall costs. In Ontario, eligible first-time homebuyers can access a land transfer tax rebate, while the city of Toronto also offers a separate rebate for first-time buyers. Understanding the specifics of each province and city's rebate program is essential to maximize these incentives in your area

Home Buyers Plan (HBP)

The Canadian government offers the Home Buyers' Plan (HBP) to assist first-time home buyers. Through this program, eligible individuals can withdraw up to \$35,000 from their RRSP (Registered Retirement Savings Plan) for a down payment, without incurring any tax. If both individuals purchasing the home are first-time buyers, they can collectively withdraw up to \$70,000 from their RRSPs. This initiative aims to facilitate homeownership by providing tax-free access to RRSP funds for down payment purposes

Home Buyer's Tax Credit (HBTC)

The First-Time Home Buyer's Tax Credit (HBTC) provides a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$750 to eligible first-time homebuyers in Canada. This credit helps offset some of the costs associated with purchasing a home, including legal fees, land transfer taxes, and other closing expenses. The exact amount of the credit is calculated based on the individual's income and the amount of eligible home purchase expenses

First Home Savings Account

The FHSA is a new registered account that will provide you tax-free savings for the purchase of a first home. Your contributions made to an FHSA are tax deductible, which reduces your taxable income for the current year. If you decide to use this amount for something other than a home, you can transfer the money to an RRSP or RRIF without affecting your contribution room.



Home Buyers Glossary

By familiarizing yourself with these home-buying basics, you'll be better equipped to make informed decisions and a wise investment.

Amortization: The length of time allotted to paying off a loan – in home-buying terms, the mortgage. Most maximum amortization periods in Canada are 25 years.

Balanced Market: In a balanced market, there is an equal balance of buyers and sellers in the market, which means reasonable offers are often accepted by sellers, and homes sell within a reasonable amount of time and prices remain stable.

Bridge Financing: A short-term loan designed to "bridge" the gap for homebuyers who have purchased their new home before selling their existing home. This type of financing is common in a seller's market, allowing homebuyers to purchase without having to sell first.

Buyer's Market: In a buyer's market, there are more homes on the market than there are buyers, giving the limited number of buyers more choice and greater negotiating power. Homes may stay on the market longer, and prices can be stable or dropping.

Closing: This is the last step of the real estate transaction, once all the offer conditions outlined in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale have been met and ownership of the property is transferred to the buyer. Once the closing period has passed, the keys are exchanged on the closing date outlined in the offer.

Closing Costs: The costs associated with "closing" the purchase deal. These costs can include legal and administrative fees related to the home purchase. Closing costs are additional to the purchase price of the home.

Comparative Market Analysis: Comparative market analysis (CMA) is a report on comparable homes in the area that is used to derive an accurate value for the home in question.

Home Inspection: The home inspection is performed to identify any existing or potential underlying problems in a home. This not only protects the buyer from risk, but also gives the buyer leverage when negotiating a reduced selling price.

Condominium Ownership: A form of ownership whereby you own your unit and have an interest in common elements such as the lobby, elevators, halls, parking garage and building exterior. The condominium association is responsible for maintenance of building and common elements, and collects a monthly condo fee from each owner, based on their proportionate share of the building.

Contingencies/Conditions: This term refers to conditions that have to be met in order for the purchase of a home to be finalized. For example, there may be contingencies that the mortgage loan must be approved or the appraised value must be near the final sale price.

Home Buyers Glossary

(cont'd)

Deposit: An up-front payment made by the buyer to the seller at the time the offer is accepted. The deposit shows the seller that the buyer is serious about the purchase. This amount will be held in trust by the agent or lawyer until the deal closes, at which point it is applied to the purchase price.

Down Payment: The down payment is the amount of money paid-up front for a home, in order to secure a mortgage. In Canada, the minimum down payment is 5% of the home's total purchase price. Down payments less than 20% of a home's purchase price require mortgage loan insurance. The selling price, minus the deposit and down payment, is the amount of the mortgage loan.

Dual Agency: Dual agency is when one agent represents both sides, rather than having both a buyer's agent and a listing agent.

Equity: The difference between a home's market value and the amount owing on the mortgage. This is the portion of the home that has been paid for and is officially "owned."

Fixed-Rate Mortgage: A fixed-rate mortgage guarantees your interest rate and for a pre-determined amount of time, typically 5 years. When the term expires, you have the option to stay with the same lender or switch to a different one.

Freehold Ownership: A form of ownership whereby you own the property and assume responsibility for everything inside and outside the home.

Land Transfer Tax: This is the tax payable by the buyer to the province and/or municipality in which the transaction occurred upon transferring land. The amount varies depending on the region, the size of the land and other factors.

High-Ratio Mortgage: A high-ratio mortgage is a mortgage where the borrower has less than 20% of the home's purchase price to make as the down payment. A high-ratio mortgage with a down payment between 5% and 19% of the purchase price requires mortgage loan insurance. In Canada, 5% is the minimum amount required for the down payment.

Home Appraisal: A qualified professional provides a market value assessment of a home based on several factors such as property size, location, age of the home, etc. This is used to satisfy mortgage requirements, giving mortgage financing companies confirmation of the mortgaged property's value.

Home Buyers' Amount: This is a \$5,000 non-refundable federal income tax credit on a qualifying home, providing up to \$750 in tax relief to assist first-time buyers with purchase-related costs.

Home Buyers' Plan: A federal program allowing first-time homebuyers to withdraw up to \$35,000 interest-free from their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) to help purchase or build a qualifying home. The borrowed amount must be repaid within 15 years to avoid paying a penalty.

Home Buyers Glossary

(cont'd)

Land Survey: A land survey will identify the property lines. This is not required to purchase a home, but it is recommended and may be required by the mortgage lender to clarify where on the property the owner has jurisdiction. This is important if issues arise between neighbours or the municipality, should the owner wish to make changes in the future such as installing a pool, fence or other renovations involving property lines.

Mortgage Loan Insurance: If your down payment is less than 20% of the purchase price of the home, mortgage loan insurance is required. It protects the lender in case of payment default. Premiums are calculated as a percentage of the down payment, changing at the 5%, 10% and 15% thresholds.

Mortgage Pre-approval: A mortgage pre-approval helps buyers understand how much they can borrow before going through the mortgage application process. Allows you to make an immediate offer when you find a home, since you know how much you'll be approved for with this lender, and locks in the current interest rate for a period of time insulating you against near-term rate increases.

Offer: An offer is a legal agreement to purchase a home. An offer can be conditional on a number of factors, commonly conditional on financing and a home inspection. If the conditions are not met, the buyer can cancel their offer.

Porting: Transferring your mortgage (and the existing interest rate and terms) from one property to another.

Seller's Market: In a seller's market, there are more buyers than there are homes for sale. With fewer homes on the market and more buyers, homes sell quickly in a seller's market. Prices of homes are likely to increase, and there are more likely to be multiple offers on a home. Multiple offers give the seller negotiating power, and conditional offers may be rejected.

Title Insurance: Title insurance is not mandatory in Canada, but it is highly recommended to protect both the buyer and the mortgage lender against losses related to the property title or ownership, such as unknown title defects, existing liens against the property's title, encroachment issues, title fraud, errors in surveys and public records, and title-related issues that could prevent you from selling, leasing or obtaining a mortgage. Your lawyer can advise you on this.

Variable Rate Mortgage: A variable rate mortgage fluctuates with the prime rate. Your monthly payments remain the same, but the proportion of your payment going toward principal versus interest can change.

Virtual Deals: The home-buying process completed by means of technology in place of face-to-face contact. Some common digital tools include 360 home tours and video showings, video conference calls, e-documents, e-signatures and e-transfers.

Raving Reviews FROM SATISFIED CLIENTS



NICOLE D.



The Regona sisters are knowledgeable, approachable and confident! I felt confident that they were going to lead me in the right direction for my investment property and they did! I am so happy I crossed paths with you beautiful ladies. Thank you again for ensuring my investment will be one that will carry me comfortably through retirement.



NATALIE L.



The Regona Sisters Team always went above and beyond to make sure we were happy. They made everything so simple and made buying a house a breeze. Highly recommended!



REMIE Z.



My fiancé and I recently purchased a condo with the Regona Sisters. As first time home buyers we were nervous about the process, however, they put our minds at ease after our very first meeting. Their vast knowledge not only helped us make an informed decision but also helped us find our perfect first home! They had an incredibly positive attitude and not only made this experience easy going, but also fun! They were very accommodating with our tight timeline and went out of her way to make sure our deadline was met. We would highly recommend her to everyone and we can't thank them enough for their help. We look forward to working with them again in the future. Thanks You!!!



ADRIAN P.



As a first time home buyer I didn't know what to expect going into our first purchase. I was nervous, hesitant and full of questions. The Regona Sisters were instrumental in making our purchase not only a success, but an easy experience. All questions were answered, our minds were put at ease and most importantly we did not feel rushed through this process.



Let Our *Experience* Be Your *Guide*

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