**Make the Move**

A Checklist for First Time Home Buyer’s

**FINANCING**

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|  | **Get Your Finances In Order** That includes obtaining your credit score, paying off as much of your debt as you can, and making sure you’re caught up on your taxes. |
|  | **Make A Budget** You’ll want to make a budget as soon as possible and stick to it. The transition to home ownership (in other words, having a mortgage) will be easier if you make a budget well in-advance of moving into your new home. |
|  | **Get Pre-Approved For A Home Loan** It will be easier to find and buy a home if you get a loan first. Additionally, you’ll know exactly how much money you can spend on a home. |
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**FINDING A HOME**

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|  | **Decide What You Want In A Home** Make a list of things that you absolutely need and things you want in a home. Keep in mind that you’ll have to be flexible when selecting a house to buy. Still, you should have an idea of what you want and what you don’t want. |
|  | **Get A Real Estate Agent** Hopefully you know someone who knows someone that’s a good real estate agent. If you don’t, start scouring the internet for an agent that’s both qualified and knowledgeable. If you have to, interview several agents to find the one that best fits your needs and personality. |
|  | **Find The Home** Now that you know what you want and you have someone in your corner, it’s time to find a potential home to buy. Your real estate agent should be able to show you several homes within your price range in neighborhoods you wish to live in. Get ready for a lot of looking around. |

**MAKING THE OFFER**

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|  | **Are You Absolutely Sure You Want To Make An Offer?** If you make an offer on a home you have options *IF* the seller declines, counteroffers, or does not respond. However, if they accept your offer then you’ve basically signed a contract to buy the home. So *ONLY* make an offer if you’re absolutely sure you’ve found the house you want to buy. |
|  | **Write An Offer** When it comes time to write an offer, your agent will help you come up with a reasonable figure. Still, you should have a good idea of a home’s value based on its size, condition, and neighborhood. |

**NEGOTIATING THE PRICE**

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|  | **Beginning The Negotiations** If the home owner accepts your offer then you can obviously skip this step. If the home owner comes back with a counteroffer then it’s game on. To negotiate effectively you need to do three things: be informed, get prepared, and be realistic. |
|  | **Be Informed** You’ll want to know the “real” price of the home you’re trying to buy. This is where your real estate agent is indispensable as they have the resources to determine a home’s market value. You’ll also want to know the condition of the home, any extra amenities it may have, and why the seller is selling. |
|  | **Get Prepared** You must be prepared to walk away from a home if you can’t procure an offer that’s within your budget. You may “love” the home, but if you overpay you’ll soon grow to regret your decision. Bottom line, you can’t buy a home based on feelings. Your decision must be governed by reason and logic. |
|  | **Be Realistic** Don’t make a low offer just to see if you can get a deal. All your offers should be well thought out, respectful, and realistic. If you make the home owners an offer they can easily refuse you may jeopardize further negotiations and/or end up paying more for the house. |

**GETTING THE HOME INSPECTED**

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|  | **Home Inspection** Depending on the type of loan you’ve secured, the house you’re looking to buy will be inspected two to three times. Even if you can, don’t skip this step. Yes, you’re out the $400 to $500 for a home inspection (regardless of whether you buy the home or not), but it’s a small price to pay if it discovers a problem that will eventually cost thousands of dollars to fix. |

**THE CLOSING**

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|  | **Final Walk Through** Shortly before closing, you and your agent will walk through the house to make sure it’s in the condition agreed upon by you and the home owner. You’ll also want to check that everything that’s supposed to be in the home is in the home and everything that was to be repaired has been repaired. |
|  | **Secure Final Loan Approval** Since you’ve already been approved for a loan this step should be very easy. We’ve included it as a reminder to make sure your finances are in order before entering the final stages of the closing process. |
|  | **Review The Settlement Statement** Available three days prior to the actual closing, it contains the amount of cash you’ll need when you sign the papers. Also, look over the statement for any discrepancies. If you find any you’ll want them fixed before closing. |
|  | **Certified Funds** On closing day, you’ll want to certify funds for closing costs and your down payment. |
|  | **Sign The Papers** At an attorney’s office, a title company or an escrow company, you’ll sign all the necessary documents (and there are a bunch of them), the house will be put into your name, your homeowners’ insurance will be verified, and you’ll commit to the terms of the mortgage. When it’s all done, you’ll be given the keys to your home. Congratulations, you’re now a home owner. |