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## **Buying a Home Checklist**

- ✓ **find an agent**  
Interview three if you can and remember there are real estate companies that work for just sellers, some that work for sellers or buyers, some that try to work for both at the same time, and others that just work for buyers.
- ✓ **obtain a preapproval**  
If you will be getting a mortgage, a preapproval will help make you more comfortable with what a mortgage payment would be like. A good agent will typically have recommendations for credible lenders. Choose a lender based on their proven ability to get the job done correctly first, then consider the costs.
- ✓ **start looking at homes**  
Open houses typically are not the best use of time because they are only a small indication of the inventory of available homes.
- ✓ **narrow down your choices**  
Start cutting down your list to a target group of two or three homes. Then make a second visit to do a “detailed” viewing.
- ✓ **review purchase contracts**  
Don’t wait till the day you need to sign a contract to look at one. Your agent should be reviewing the documents, the processes, and the local customs for negotiations and contingencies with you while you are still searching for a home. You’ll be much more confident when the time comes to “sign on the bottom line.”
- ✓ **start negotiating**  
Once you decide on a specific home, make an offer immediately. Your negotiating position gets dramatically worse if another buyer starts negotiating on the same home before you have a contract signed.
- ✓ **check comps**  
If you haven’t already seen comparable sales data by now, this is the time you need to be reviewing it to know how much you should be paying for the home.
- ✓ **negotiate to contract status**  
If you and the seller can find common ground, then you can sign a contract and move forward. If you can’t come to an agreement that makes sense for both of you, start looking at other homes and hope for better luck with the next negotiation.
- ✓ **shop for a mortgage**  
Now that you have a contract, you can shop for the best mortgage deal. Remember, focus first on the lenders that you know will get the job done, and then make cost comparisons to find the best deal.
- ✓ **get the home inspected**  
Make sure to have your place checked out for lead, termites, radon, and/or other concerns.
- ✓ **apply for homeowner’s insurance**  
YOU WILL NEED: Address, county, year built, and type of construction. Type of roof. Type of heat (and any form of alternate heat, such as a woodstove). Square footage of home.
- ✓ **do a final walk-through of the home**
- ✓ Prior to closing, go back and re-inspect the home to make sure that the property condition is the same as you first seen it. Bring a checklist with you. See our “Walk-thru Checklist” for more details.
- ✓ **CLOSING - (close of escrow)**  
Congratulation! The home is officially yours. Schedule a time to pick the house key and set a move-in date.