

Top Ten Tips For House Hunters

1. Develop a working relationship with a real estate professional you trust. Solicit recommendations from friends or acquaintances that recently purchased homes and were happy with their agent. Call the agents and ask questions about their experience, references and areas of specialization. One advantage of REALTORS® is their pledge to adhere to a strict code of ethics.
2. Make sure your credit report is accurate. If it's inaccurate, fix it! Pay off outstanding debts or lower the balances. It may take months to remove problem items from your credit report, so start early.
3. Get pre-approval on a home loan. "Pre-approval" reflects a written commitment from a lender.
4. Spend time going through open houses and prioritize the items on your "wish list." The more familiar you are with the types of homes your money can buy, the more quickly you can act once you find the home that best fits your needs.
5. Consider working with a buyers agent who will represent you and not the seller the transaction. The primary duties of a "buyers agent" are to be loyal to the **buyer**.
6. Use the internet as a search tool. Most companies list homes on the internet before advertising in the newspaper.
7. Be accessible! It is important to make sure your agent knows how to reach you quickly, whether by pager, fax, or phone or email.
8. If you don't have the traditional 20% down payment, work with your lender to see if you qualify for a FHA or VA 5% down loan or other special programs. Remember if your down payment is less than 20%, you will need to make monthly mortgage insurance payments that will be added to your loan.
9. Make your offer contingent on a professional inspection. A thorough inspection may reveal flaws in structure, basic systems, and appliances—possibly saving you thousands of dollars and sparing you grief
10. Be flexible. Sellers often want to close as soon as possible and an offer that is convenient to them adds to the attractiveness of the offer. A higher earnest money check can also improve the position of your offer.

