

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN
BUYING A HOME



SPRING 2019
EDITION

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4 Reasons To Buy A Home This Spring

Below are four great reasons to consider buying a home today instead of waiting.

1. Prices Will Continue to Rise

CoreLogic's latest Home Price Index reports that home prices have appreciated by 4.7% over the last 12 months. The same report predicts that prices will continue to increase at a rate of 4.6% over the next year.

The bottom in home prices has come and gone. Home values will continue to appreciate for years. Waiting no longer makes sense.

2. Mortgage Interest Rates Are Projected to Increase

Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey shows that interest rates for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage have started to level off at just under 4.5%. Most experts predict that rates will rise over the next 12 months. The *Mortgage Bankers Association*, *Fannie Mae*, *Freddie Mac*, and the *National Association of Realtors* are in unison, projecting that rates will increase by this time next year.

An increase in rates will impact YOUR monthly mortgage payment. A year from now, your housing expense will increase if a mortgage is necessary to buy your next home.

3. Either Way, You Are Paying a Mortgage

There are some renters who have not yet purchased a home because they are uncomfortable taking on the obligation of a mortgage. Everyone should realize that unless you are living with your parents rent-free, you are paying a mortgage - either yours or your landlord's.

As an owner, your mortgage payment is a form of *'forced savings'* that allows you to have equity in your home that you can tap into later in life. As a renter, you guarantee your landlord is the person with that equity.

Are you ready to put your housing cost to work for you?

4. It's Time to Move on with Your Life

The *'cost'* of a home is determined by two major components: the price of the home and the current mortgage rate. It appears that both are on the rise.

But what if they weren't? Would you wait?

Look at the actual reason you are buying and decide if it is worth waiting. Whether you want to have a great place for your children to grow up, you want your family to be safer, or you just want to have control over renovations, maybe now is the time to buy.

If the right thing for you and your family is to purchase a home this year, buying sooner rather than later could lead to substantial savings.



2 Factors To Watch In Today's Real Estate Market

When it comes to buying or selling a home there are many factors you should consider. Where you want to live, why you want to buy or sell, and who will help you along your journey are just some of those factors. When it comes to today's real estate market, though, the top two factors to consider are what's happening with interest rates & inventory.

Interest Rates

Mortgage interest rates had been on the rise for the majority of 2018, before slowing to where they are now, below 4.5% according to *Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey*.

The interest rate you secure when buying a home not only greatly impacts your monthly housing costs, but also impacts your purchasing power.

Purchasing power, simply put, is the amount of home you can afford to buy for the budget you have available to spend. As rates increase, the price of the house you can afford to buy will decrease if you plan to stay within a certain monthly housing budget.

The chart below demonstrates the impact rising interest rates would have if you planned to purchase a \$400,000 home while keeping your principal and interest payments between \$2,020-\$2,050 a month.

With each quarter of a percent increase in interest rate, the value of the home you can afford decreases by 2.5% (in this example, \$10,000). Experts predict that mortgage rates will be closer to 5% by this time next year.

Buyer's Purchasing Power

RATE	Principal & Interest Payments				
	\$ 2,026	\$ 2,034	\$ 2,040	\$ 2,044	\$ 2,044
6.00	\$ 2,398	\$ 2,338	\$ 2,278	\$ 2,218	\$ 2,158
5.75	\$ 2,334	\$ 2,276	\$ 2,218	\$ 2,160	\$ 2,100
5.50	\$ 2,272	\$ 2,214	\$ 2,158	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,044
5.25	\$ 2,208	\$ 2,154	\$ 2,098	\$ 2,044	\$ 1,988
5.00	\$ 2,148	\$ 2,094	\$ 2,040	\$ 1,986	\$ 1,932
4.75	\$ 2,086	\$ 2,034	\$ 1,982	\$ 1,930	\$ 1,878
4.50	\$ 2,026	\$ 1,976	\$ 1,926	\$ 1,874	\$ 1,824
	\$ 400,000	\$ 390,000	\$ 380,000	\$ 370,000	\$ 360,000
		-2.5%	-5%	-7.5%	-10%

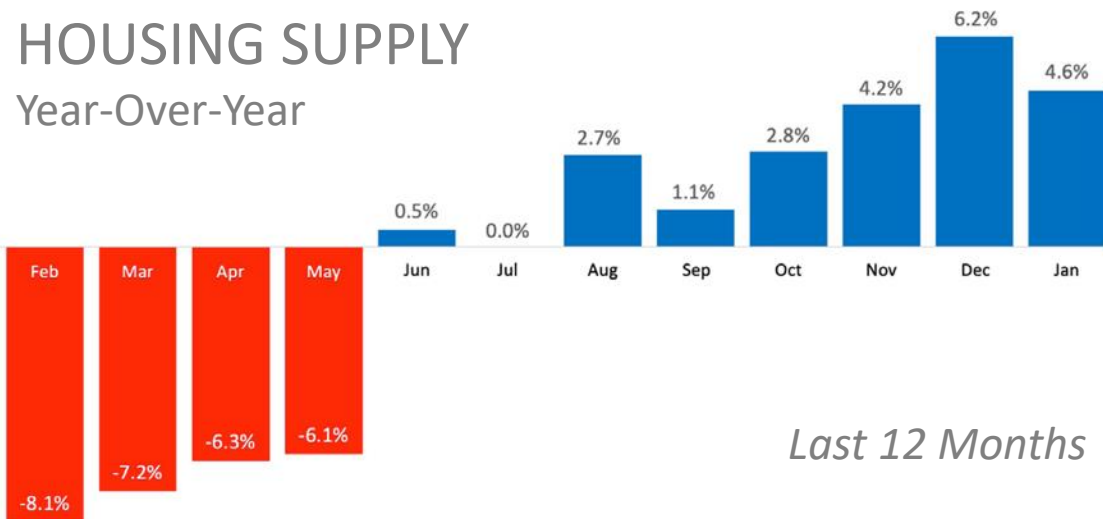
Principal & Interest Payments rounded to the nearest dollar amount

Inventory

A 'normal' real estate market requires there to be a 6-month supply of homes for sale in order for prices to increase only with inflation. According to the *National Association of Realtors* (NAR), listing inventory is currently at a 3.9-month supply (still well below the 6 months needed), which has put upward pressure on home prices. **Home prices have increased year-over-year for the last 83 straight months.**

The inventory of homes for sale in the real estate market had been on a steady decline and experienced year-over-year drops for 36 straight months (from July 2015 to May 2018), but we are starting to see a shift in inventory over the last eight months.

The chart below shows the change in housing supply over the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months. As you can see, beginning in June, inventory levels have started to increase as compared to the same time last year.



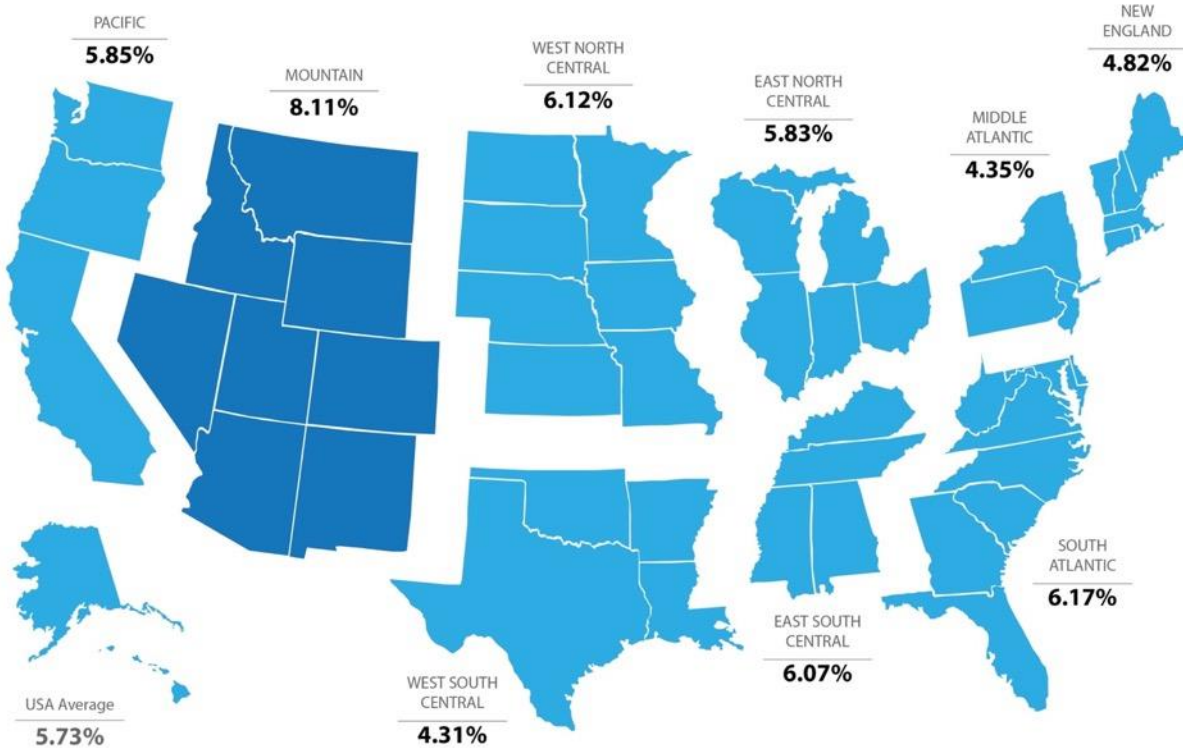
Bottom Line

If you are planning to enter the housing market, either as a buyer or a seller, let's get together to discuss what changes in mortgage interest rates and inventory could mean for you.

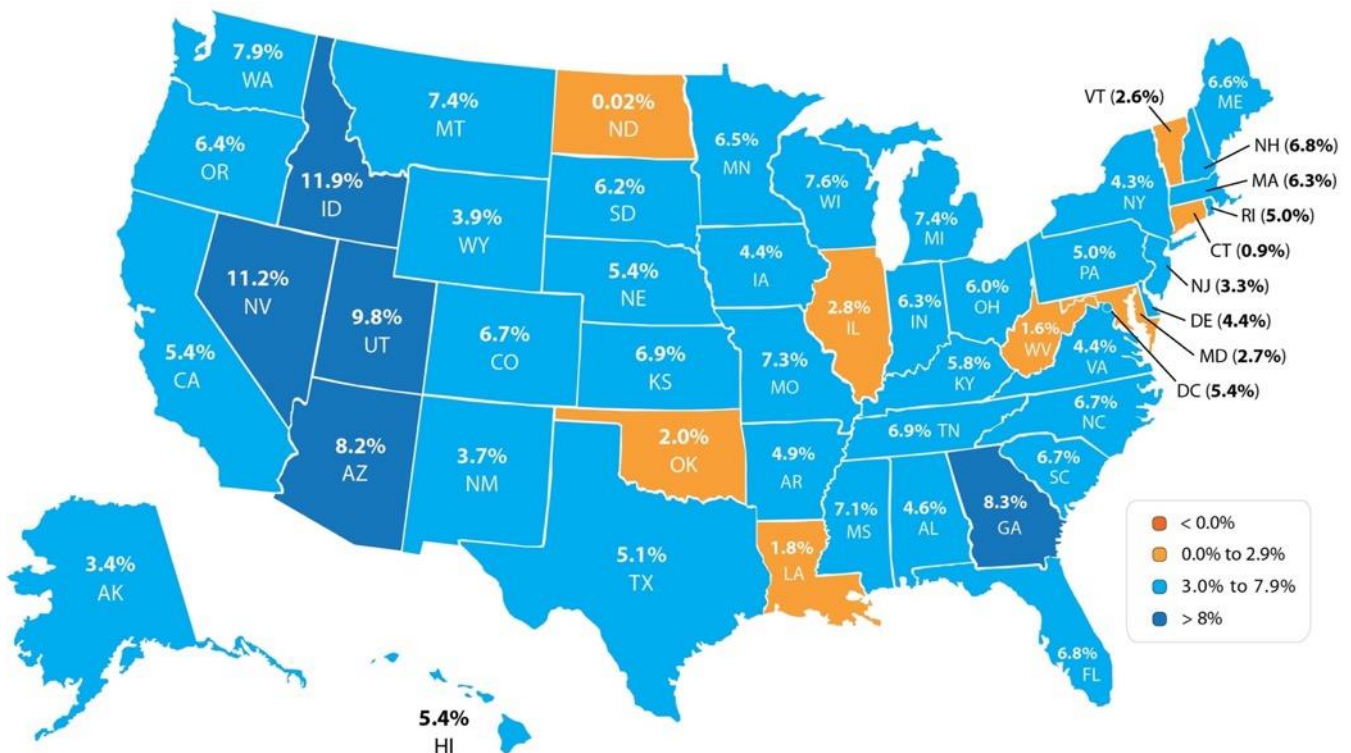


Home Prices Over The Last Year

Every quarter, the *Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA)* reports on the year-over-year changes in home prices. Below, you will see that prices are up year-over-year in every region.



Looking at the breakdown by state, you can see that over the past year, each state has appreciated at a different rate. This is important to understand if you are planning to relocate to a different area of the country. Waiting to move may end up costing you more!



Do You Know The Cost Of Waiting To Buy?

CoreLogic recently shared that national home prices have increased by 4.7% year-over-year. Over that same time period, interest rates have remained historically low which has allowed many buyers to enter the market.

As a seller, you will be most concerned about 'short-term price' – where home values are headed over the next six months. As a buyer, however, you must not be concerned about price, but instead about the 'long-term cost' of the home.

The Mortgage Bankers Association, Freddie Mac, and Fannie Mae all project that mortgage interest rates will increase by this time next year. According to CoreLogic's most recent Home Price Index Report, home prices will appreciate by 4.6% over the next 12 months.

What Does This Mean as a Buyer?

If home prices appreciate by the 4.6% predicted by CoreLogic **over the next twelve months**, here is a simple demonstration of the impact an increase in interest rate would have on the mortgage payment of a home selling for approximately \$250,000 today:

	Mortgage	Interest Rate*	Payment (P&I)**
Today	\$250,000	4.35%	\$1,244.53
2019	\$261,500	4.90%	\$1,387.85

Difference in Monthly Payment

\$143.32

**Rates based on Freddie Mac's prediction at time of print*

Monthly	Annually	Over 30 Years
\$143.32	\$1,719.84	\$51,595

Bottom Line

If buying a home is in your plan for this year, doing it sooner rather than later could save you thousands of dollars over the terms of your loan.



3 Things You Need In A Shifting Market

If you are thinking of buying a home, today's real estate headlines can be confusing – perhaps even concerning. What is actually happening with mortgage rates? Are home values dropping or are they just rising at a slower pace? What impact will the economy have on the housing market?

If you are a buyer, you need to know what it will mean to your family if you go ahead with the move. You need to understand three things:

1. What is happening in the housing market right now?

Consumers must get past those fear-mongering headlines and gain a deep understanding of what is truly happening. How strong is buyer demand right now? How much competition do listings have today compared to what they will have in the coming months? People want to make an educated decision on what is probably their family's greatest financial asset.

2. Why is it happening?

Understanding the individual pieces that impact the sale or purchase of real estate is important. Understanding how those pieces impact each other is critical. How does the amount of a down payment impact the mortgage rate a buyer will be offered?

3. How do the first two affect your local market?

Basically, you want an understanding of the overall housing market and a simple and effective explanation of how it will impact your personal real estate goals.

Bottom Line

The best way to get all three is to contact a local real estate professional who understands this shifting real estate market and can expertly guide you on the journey to reach your housing goals. Let's get together to discuss what today's market means for you.

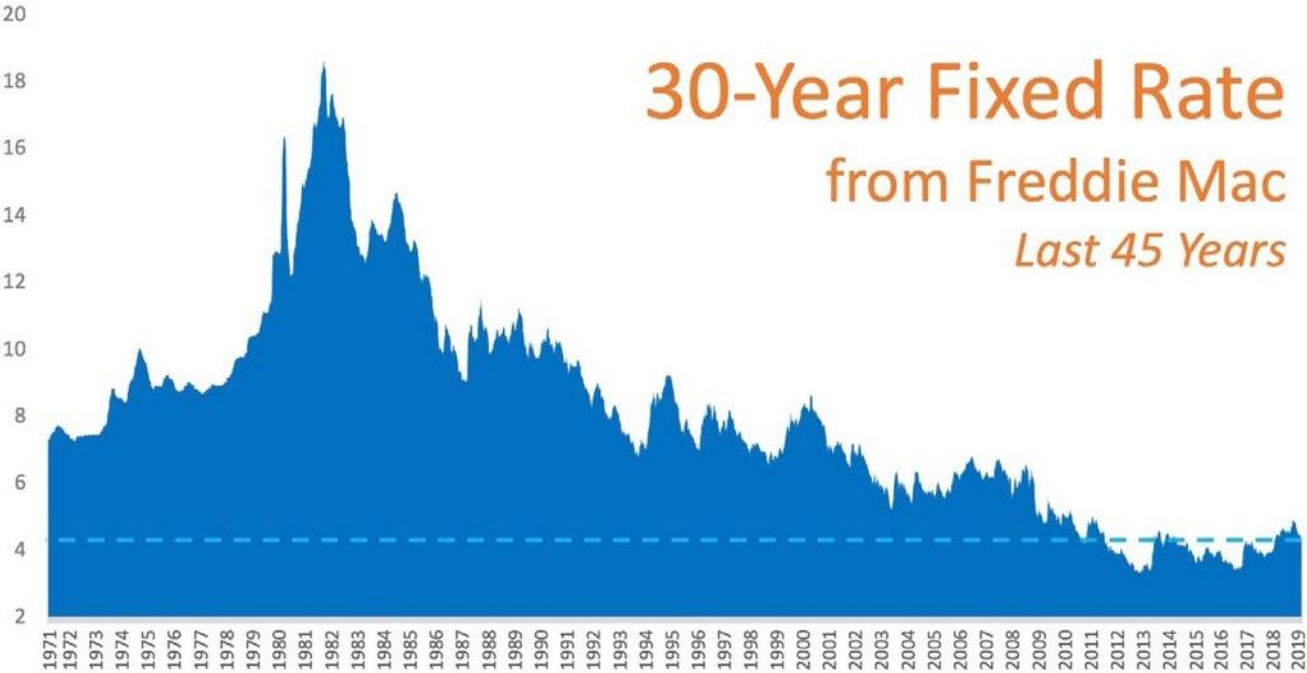


Be Thankful You Don't Have To Pay Mom & Dad's Interest Rate

Interest rates increased steadily over the course of 2018 until November, when they reversed course. So far in 2019, that trend has continued, with rates below 4.5%. This has given many buyers relief from rising home prices and helped with affordability. The experts agree that rates will increase over the next 12 months, just not as quickly as they had in 2018.

The rate you secure greatly impacts your monthly mortgage payment and the amount you will ultimately pay for your home. Don't let the prediction that rates will increase stop you from purchasing your dream home this year.

Let's take a look at a historical view of interest rates over the last 45 years.



Bottom Line

Be thankful that you can still get a better interest rate than your older brother or sister did ten years ago, a lower rate than your parents did twenty years ago, and a better rate than your grandparents did forty years ago.

Buying A Home? Do You Know the Lingo?

To start you on your path with confidence, we have compiled a list of some of the most common terms used when buying a home.

Appraisal – A professional analysis used to estimate the value of the home. *A necessary step in validating the home's worth to you & your lender to secure financing.*

Closing Costs – The cost to complete the real estate transaction. Paid at closing, they include: points, taxes, title insurance, financing costs, items that must be prepaid or escrowed. *Ask your lender for a complete list of closing cost items.*

Credit Score – A number ranging from 300-850, that is based on an analysis of your credit history. *Helps lenders determine the likelihood that you'll repay future debts.*

Down Payment – Down payments are typically 3-20% of the purchase price of the home. 0% down programs also exist, ask your lender for more information.

Mortgage Rate – The interest rate you pay to borrow money to buy your house. *The lower the rate, the better.*

Pre-Approval Letter – A letter from a lender indicating that you qualify for a mortgage of a specific amount.

Real Estate Professional – An individual who provides services in buying & selling homes. *Real estate professionals are there to help you through the confusing paperwork, find your dream home, negotiate any of the details that come up, and to help you know exactly what's going on in the housing market.*

The best way to ensure that your home-buying process is a confident one is to find a real estate pro who will guide you through every aspect of the transaction with *'the heart of a teacher'*, putting your family's needs first.

Freddie Mac – My Home Section



Why Pre-Approval Should Be Your First Step

In many markets across the country, the number of buyers searching for their dream homes greatly exceeds the number of homes for sale. This has led to a competitive marketplace where buyers often need to stand out. One way to show you are serious about buying your dream home is to get pre-qualified or pre-approved for a mortgage before starting your search.

Even if you are in a market that is not as competitive, knowing your budget will give you the confidence to know if your dream home is within your reach.

Freddie Mac lays out the advantages of pre-approval in the 'My Home' section of their website.

“It’s highly recommended that you work with your lender to get pre-approved before you begin house hunting. Pre-approval will tell you how much home you can afford and can help you move faster, and with greater confidence, in competitive markets.”

One of the many advantages of working with a local real estate professional is that many have relationships with lenders who will be able to help you with this process. Once you have selected a lender, you will need to fill out their loan application and provide them with important information regarding “your credit, debt, work history, down payment and residential history.”

Freddie Mac describes the '4 Cs' that help determine the amount you will be qualified to borrow:

- 1. Capacity:** Your current and future ability to make your payments
- 2. Capital or Cash Reserves:** The money, savings, and investments you have that can be sold quickly for cash
- 3. Collateral:** The home, or type of home, that you would like to purchase
- 4. Credit:** Your history of paying bills and other debts on time

Getting pre-approved is one of many steps that will show home sellers that you are serious about buying, and it often helps speed up the process once your offer has been accepted.

Bottom Line

Many potential homebuyers overestimate the down payment and credit scores needed to qualify for a mortgage today. If you are ready and willing to buy, you may be surprised at your ability to do so.



One More Time... You Do NOT Need 20% Down To Buy!

The largest obstacle renters face when planning to buy a home is saving for a down payment. This challenge is amplified by rising rents, which has eaten into the amount of money renters have leftover for savings each month after paying expenses.

In combination with higher rents, survey after survey has shown that non-homeowners (renters and those living rent-free with family or friends) believe they need to save upwards of 20% for their down payment!

According to the “*Barriers to Accessing Homeownership*” study commissioned in partnership between the *Urban Institute*, *Down Payment Resource*, and *Freddie Mac*, 39% of non-homeowners and 30% of those who already own a home believe they need more than a 20% down payment.

The percentage of those who are aware of low-down payment programs (those under 5%) is surprisingly low at 12% for non-homeowners and 13% for homeowners.

A recent *Convergys Analytics* report found that 49% of renters believe they need at least a 20% down payment.

The median down payment on loans approved in 2018 was only 5%! Those waiting until they have over 20% may already have enough saved to buy now!

There are over 45 million millennials (33%) who are mortgage ready right now, meaning their income, debt, and credit scores would all allow them to qualify for a mortgage today!

Bottom Line

If your five-year plan includes buying a home, let’s get together to determine what it will take to make that plan a reality. You may be closer to your dream than you realize!



The True Cost Of NOT Owning Your Home

Owning a home has great financial benefits, yet many continue to rent. Let's look at the financial reasons why owning a home of your own has been a part of the American Dream for the entirety of America's existence.

Realtor.com reported that:

“Buying remains the more attractive option in the long term – that remains the American dream, and it’s true in many markets where renting has become really the shortsighted option... as people get more savings in their pockets, buying becomes the better option.”

What proof exists that owning is financially better than renting?

1. Here are the top 5 financial benefits of homeownership:

- Homeownership is a form of forced savings.
- Homeownership provides tax savings.
- Homeownership allows you to lock in your monthly housing cost.
- Buying a home is cheaper than renting.
- No other investment lets you live inside of it.

2. Studies have shown that a homeowner's net worth is 44x greater than that of a renter.

3. A family who purchased a median-priced home at the start of 2019 will build more than \$49,000 in family wealth over the next five years with projected price appreciation alone.

4. Some argue that renting eliminates the cost of taxes and home repairs, but every potential renter must realize that all the expenses the landlord incurs are already baked into the rent payment – along with a profit margin!

Bottom Line

Owning a home has many social and financial benefits that cannot be achieved by renting.



Starting To Look For A Home? Know What You Want vs. What You Need

In this day and age of being able to shop for anything anywhere, it is very important to know what you're looking for when you start your home search.

If you've been thinking about buying a home of your own for some time now, you've probably come up with a list of things that you'd LOVE to have in your new home. Many new homebuyers fantasize about the amenities that they see on television or *Pinterest*, and start looking at the countless homes listed for sale with rose-colored glasses.

Do you really need that farmhouse sink in the kitchen in order to be happy with your home choice? Would a two-car garage be a convenience or a necessity? Could the man cave of your dreams be a future renovation project instead of a deal breaker now?

The first step in your home buying process should be pre-approval for your mortgage. This allows you to know your budget before you fall in love with a home that is way outside of it.

The next step is to list all the features of a home that you would like and to qualify them as follows:

- **'Must-Haves'** – if this property does not have these items, then it shouldn't even be considered. (ex: distance from work or family, number of bedrooms/bathrooms)
- **'Should-Haves'** – if the property hits all of the 'must-haves' and some of the 'should-haves,' it stays in contention, but does not need to have *all* of these features.
- **'Absolute-Wish List'** – if we find a property in our budget that has all of the 'must-haves,' most of the 'should-haves,' and ANY of these, it's the winner!

Bottom Line

Having this list fleshed out before starting your search will save you time and frustration, while also letting your agent know what features are most important to you before beginning to show you houses in your desired area.



4 Proven Ways Real Estate Can Build Sizable Family Wealth

David Greene, co-host of the *BiggerPockets* podcast and a nationally renowned author and speaker, recently wrote an article in *Forbes* explaining how investing in real estate could help build wealth. Many of the points he made also apply to a family owning their own home. Here are a few:

1. Appreciation

“The rising of home prices over time, is how the majority of wealth is built in real estate. This is the ‘home run’ you hear of when people make a large windfall of money. While prices fluctuate, over the long run real estate values have always gone up, always, and there is no reason to think that is going to change.”

One thing to consider when it comes to real estate appreciation affecting your ROI is the fact that appreciation combined with leverage offers huge returns. If you buy a property for \$200,000 and it appreciates to \$220,000, your property had made you a 10% return. However, you likely didn’t pay cash for the property and instead used the bank’s money. If you consider that you may have put 10% down (\$20,000), you actually have doubled your investment, a 100% return.”

2. Leverage

“By nature, real estate is one of the easiest assets to leverage I have ever come across—maybe the easiest. Not only is it easy to leverage the financing of it, but the terms are incredible compared to any other kind of loan. Interest rates are currently below 5%, down payments can be 20% or less, and loans are routinely amortized over 30-year periods.”

3. Paying Off the Debt

“One of the best parts of investing in real estate is the fact that ... you’re slowly paying down your loan balance with each payment to the bank... After enough time passes, a good chunk of every payment comes off the loan balance, and wealth is created.”

4. Forced Equity

“Forced equity is a term used to refer to the wealth that is created when an investor does work to a property to make it worth more...”

Example of this would be adding a third or fourth bedroom to a property with only two, adding a second bathroom to a property with only one, or adding more square footage to a property with less than the surrounding houses.”

Though Green was talking about investors, the same could be said about a family upgrading their own home.

Bottom Line

Green put it best by saying:

“There are many ways to build wealth in America, but real estate might be the safest, steadiest and simplest way to do so.”





The Difference Having a Pro On Your Side Makes

In today's fast-paced world, where answers are a *Google* search away there are some who may wonder what the benefits of hiring a real estate professional to help them in their home search are. The truth is, with the addition of more information comes more confusion.

Shows like *Property Brothers*, *Fixer Upper*, and the dozens more on *HGTV* have given many a false sense of what it's like to buy and sell a home.

Now more than ever, you need an expert on your side who is going to guide you toward your dreams and not let anything get in the way of achieving them. Buying and/or selling a home is definitely not something you want to DIY (Do It Yourself)!

Here are just some of the reasons you need a real estate professional in your corner:

There's more to real estate than finding a house you like online!

There are over 230 possible steps that need to take place during every successful real estate transaction. Don't you want someone who has been there before, someone who knows what these actions are, to ensure you achieve your dream?

You Need a Skilled Negotiator

In today's market, hiring a talented negotiator could save you thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of dollars. Each step of the way, from the original offer, to the possible renegotiation of that offer after a home inspection, to the possible cancellation of the deal based on a troubled appraisal, you need someone who can keep the deal together until it closes.

What is the home you're buying or selling worth in today's market?

There is so much information out there on the news and on the internet about home sales, prices, and mortgage rates; how do you know what's going on specifically in your area? Who do you turn to in order to competitively and correctly price your home at the beginning of the selling process? How do you know what to offer on your dream home without paying too much or offending the seller with a lowball offer?

Dave Ramsey, the financial guru, advises:

"When getting help with money, whether it's insurance, real estate or investments, you should always look for someone with the heart of a teacher, not the heart of a salesman."

Hiring an agent who has his or her finger on the pulse of the market will make your buying or selling experience an educated one. You need someone who is going to tell you the truth, not just what they think you want to hear.

Bottom Line

Today's real estate market is highly competitive. Having a professional who's been there before to guide you through the process is a simple step that will give you a huge advantage!



Have You Put Aside Enough For Closing Costs?

There are many potential homebuyers, and even sellers, who believe that you need at least a 20% down payment in order to buy a home or move on to their next home. Time after time, we have dispelled this myth by showing that there are many loan programs that allow you to put down as little as 3% (or 0% with a VA loan).

Once you have saved enough for your down payment and are ready to start your home search, make sure that you have also saved enough for closing costs.

Freddie Mac defines closing costs as follows:

“Closing costs, also called settlement fees, will need to be paid when you obtain a mortgage. These are fees charged by people representing your purchase, including your lender, real estate agent, and other third parties involved in the transaction.

Closing costs are typically between 2 & 5% of your purchase price.”

We’ve heard from many first-time homebuyers that they wished that someone had let them know that closing costs could be so high. If you think about it, with a low down payment program, your closing costs could equal the amount that you saved for your down payment.

Here is a list of just some of the fees/costs that may be included in your closing costs, depending on where the home you wish to purchase is located:

- Government recording costs
- Appraisal fees
- Credit report fees
- Lender origination fees
- Title services (insurance, search fees)
- Tax service fees
- Survey fees
- Attorney fees
- Underwriting fees

Is there any way to avoid paying closing costs?

Work with your lender and real estate agent to see if there are any ways to decrease or defer your closing costs. There are no-closing mortgages available that feature a higher interest rate or wrap closing costs into the total cost of the mortgage (*meaning you’ll end up paying interest on your closing costs*). Work with your lender to find the option that best fits your needs.

Homebuyers can also negotiate with the seller over who pays these fees. Sometimes the seller will agree to assume the buyer’s closing fees in order to get the deal finalized.

Bottom Line

Speak with your lender and agent early and often to determine how much you’ll be responsible for at closing. Finding out you’ll need to come up with thousands of dollars right before closing is not a surprise anyone would look forward to.



Ready To Make An Offer? 4 Tips For Success

So you've been searching for that perfect house to call 'home,' and you've finally found it! The price is right and, in such a competitive market, you want to make sure you make a good offer so that you can guarantee that your dream of making this house yours comes true!

Below are 4 steps provided by *Freddie Mac* to help buyers make offers, along with some additional information for your consideration:

1. Determine Your Price

"You've found the perfect home and you're ready to buy. Now what? Your real estate agent will be by your side, helping you determine an offer price that is fair."

Based on your agent's experience and key considerations (like similar homes recently sold in the same neighborhood or the condition of the house and what you can afford), your agent will help you to determine the offer that you are going to present.

Getting pre-approved will not only show home-sellers that you are serious about buying, but it will also allow you to make your offer with confidence because you'll know that you have already been approved for a mortgage in that amount.

2. Submit an Offer

"Once you've determined your price, your agent will draw up an offer, or purchase agreement, to submit to the seller's real estate agent. This offer will include the purchase price and terms and conditions of the purchase."

Talk with your agent to find out if there are any ways in which you can make your offer stand out in this competitive market! A licensed real estate agent who is active in the neighborhoods you are considering will be instrumental in helping you put in a solid offer.

3. Negotiate the Offer

“Oftentimes, the seller will counter the offer, typically asking for a higher purchase price or to adjust the closing date. In these cases, the seller’s agent will submit a counteroffer to your agent, detailing their desired changes, at this time, you can either accept the offer or decide if you want to counter.

Each time changes are made through a counteroffer, you or the seller have the option to accept, reject or counter it again. The contract is considered final when both parties sign the written offer.”

If your offer is approved, *Freddie Mac* urges you to *“always get an independent home inspection, so you know the true condition of the home.”* If the inspector uncovers undisclosed problems or issues, you can discuss any repairs that may need to be made with the seller or even cancel the contract altogether.

4. Act Fast

The inventory of homes listed for sale has remained well below the 6-month supply that is needed for a ‘normal’ market. Buyer demand has continued to outpace the supply of homes for sale, causing buyers to compete with each other for their dream homes.

Make sure that as soon as you decide that you want to make an offer, you work with your agent to present it as quickly as possible.

Bottom Line

Whether buying your first home or your fifth, having a local real estate professional who is an expert in his or her market on your side is your best bet in making sure the process goes smoothly. Let’s talk about how we can make your dream of homeownership a reality!





5 Reasons To Hire A Real Estate Professional



Contracts

They help with all disclosures & contracts necessary in today's heavily regulated environment.



Experience

They are well educated in and experienced with the entire sales process.



Negotiations

They act as a "buffer" in negotiations with all parties throughout the entire transaction.



Pricing

They help you understand today's real estate values when setting the price of a listing or an offer to purchase.



Understanding of Current Market Conditions

They simply & effectively explain today's real estate headlines & decipher what they mean to you.

Call US TO LEARN MORE

In order to make the best possible home buying decisions, you need to have the best possible information and guidance. Using an Exclusive Buyer Agent provides you with a superior level of representation and protection. This is because an Exclusive Buyer Agent only serves the homebuyer, does not take listings, and focuses their expertise on the buyer's needs and concerns.

You might come across other types of real estate "buyer agents" online who make similar claims. Not all buyer agents are Exclusive Buyer Agents. Here's what you should know. Any real estate agent can call themselves a "buyer agent" and provide basic home search and showing appointment services. They make promises like "helping you find your dream home." They are not restricted to one client type or the other. In practice, they usually represent sellers.

An Exclusive Buyer Agent will:

- Keep your motives and budget confidential
- Protect your best interests at all times
- Educate you about market conditions and the home buying process
- Perform market price comparisons and protect you from over-paying for a home
- Negotiate exclusively on your behalf, obtaining the best price and terms
- Fulfill fiduciary duties and adhere to high standards of ethics and integrity
- Provide these services and more at no additional cost you.

We would love to talk with you more about what you read here, and help you on the path to buying your new home. Our contact information is below. We look forward to hearing from you!

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