

Tips on Buying Your First Home

by NewsUSA

Nothing compares to the excitement of buying a home for the first time. However, purchasing a home also can be a nerve-racking experience, particularly if this is the first time you have dealt with real estate agents, shopped for a home loan or negotiated for the price you want. Being prepared and well-informed can help you reduce stress and make the process a success. American Home Shield, a national home warranty company based in Memphis, Tenn., offers these tips for first-time homebuyers.

- * Get mortgage information from more than one source. Mortgage rates vary from broker to broker and even from region to region. Mortgages are available from banks, mortgage specialists, credit unions and even online. Be sure to comparison-shop to get the best rate.

- * Negotiate. Before making an offer, determine your ideal purchase price, as well as the maximum price you are willing to pay. Real estate is an industry of negotiation. Therefore, don't hesitate to stand firm when asking for your ideal price. Possible upgrades and the closing date also are negotiable.

- * Factor additional costs into your plans. There are various extra costs involved in buying a home, including closing costs, attorney and lender fees, home inspections and insurance. In addition to making a down payment, be sure to set aside enough money to cover these additional costs and any upgrades you'll want to make to the home.

- * Schedule a professional home inspection. Regardless of the age of the home, get an impartial opinion on its condition and value from a reputable home inspector, such as AmeriSpec Home Inspection Service. This inspection should uncover any defects that may be costly to repair. If you are unhappy with what the inspector finds, you have the right to ask the seller to pay for certain repairs or to lower the asking price.

- * Purchase a home warranty. Even after a thorough home inspection, there is always the possibility that a major home appliance or system will break down after closing. According to "Home Repair & Remodel Cost Guide," there is a 68 percent chance that a major home appliance or system will fail in any given year. With an average cost of \$1,085 to replace one of these appliances or systems, repair costs can begin to add up.

A home warranty is your best defense against unexpected and costly repairs. For instance, the home warranty offered by American Home Shield takes care of repair or replacement costs of any covered home system or appliance for a nominal trade service-call fee.

For more information on purchasing a home warranty, log on to the AHS Web site at www.ahswarranty.com or call (800) 827-4636. Find out more about home inspections from AmeriSpec, a wholly owned subsidiary of AHS, at www.amerispec.com.

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