A Perfect Deck Starts With Redwood

by NewsUSA

How can you find and buy a home to enjoy for years to come? The first step is to answer this simple question honestly: Is it the right time for you to buy? You need to consider the tax deduction, building equity, monthly mortgage payments and maintenance expenses, funding for a down payment and closing costs, and staying in the home long enough for its appreciation to cover your transaction costs.

If you can afford and want to buy a home, the next step is to get pre-approved for a mortgage from a lender.

"I ask buyers to do this right away, before we start looking for homes," said Bill McCarthy, a Certified Residential Specialist with Coldwell Banker Devon-shire in Peoria, Ill. "That way I know what price range the buyer can afford. Otherwise, a buyer could find the 'perfect home' only to be disappointed when he or she cannot afford it."

An experienced real estate agent - especially one who is recognized as a Certified Residential Specialist, the highest designation awarded to agents in the residential sales field - can help you decide on your needs and desires for a home. For example, how important is its location? How long is your commute? How are the schools if you have children? How many bedrooms? A one- or two-car garage?

Once you have prioritized your answers, a real estate agent will know which homes to show you.

"I always explain a home's advantages and disadvantages to buyers," McCarthy said. "For example, one home may have a great layout but need updated decorating. Another home may be nicely decorated but have an awkward kitchen and dining room. I tell clients that decorating is easy to fix, but major structural deficits are not."

Once you find the right home in your price range, your agent will make an offer on your behalf and negotiate with the seller's agent. If your offer is accepted, there are a few more steps before closing.

"I always advise my clients to get a housing inspection," McCarthy said. "It ensures whether your future home's structure and mechanical systems, from the furnace to plumbing, are working properly or not."

The lender requires an appraisal of the property to confirm the home's value is sufficient to support the sales price. If that goes smoothly, you are ready for the closing. Once that's done, the home is yours.

With planning and the help of qualified professionals, such as real estate agents with the CRS designation, your home-buying experience will be rewarding instead of frustrating. To find agents nationwide with the CRS designation, go to www.crs.com.