

## 10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE PURCHASING YOUR FIRST HOME

Buying your first home is a big investment – one that can affect your lifestyle and your credit. The more information gathering you do before making your decision, the greater your satisfaction is likely to be before, during and after your move. To get you started, here are ten things to know before buying your first home.

1. **How much you can afford:** Consider all costs involved, including the down payment, closing costs, your monthly mortgage payment, taxes and maintenance, insurance and any applicable association fees.
2. **Your credit score:** Credit is an agreement to borrow money with the promise that you will pay it back later through scheduled payments. Good credit may get you a lower rate on your loan. To learn about credit and how to get your score, read our “All A bout Your Credit” article.
3. **The home-buying process:** From the pre-approval decision through inspections and the closing, the home-buying experience involves many steps. Make sure you see the big picture before you start by reviewing the Home Purchase Checklist.
4. **Your financing options:** Rates, terms, discount points and other details vary by loan type and with your credit. If you’re ready to take the next steps, find out what’s available to you by calling (800) 210-8849 to discuss your options.
5. **The right real estate agent for you:** Real estate agents specialize in a variety of areas and are each familiar with different neighborhoods. Choose one who you feel best aligns with your needs and personal preferences.
6. **The neighborhood:** Safety, commute times, noise and other surrounding factors can influence your quality of life. Make sure you visit the area, walk around the neighborhood and get a feel for the community. Take the time to research the community online to learn of any upcoming developments that may impact the housing market in that area, and look for other red flags that may impact your choice to live there.
7. **The school district:** Even if you don’t have children, you should consider the rating of the school district where you are planning to live. The school district where your home is located will have a direct impact on your taxes. And while low taxes may seem appealing because you don’t have children, strong school districts are a top priority for many home buyers, so this can help to boost your property value and your bottom line when you choose to sell. It’s important to weigh the pros and cons for your situation now and in the future.
8. **The state of the market:** Is it a buyer’s or a seller’s market? Can you get more house for less if you wait a little longer? Timing can be crucial in determining the total cost of your first home.
9. **Comparable prices:** How much do similar homes in the surrounding area cost? You may want to compare houses in several neighborhoods to make sure you’re getting a good value. Ask your real estate agent for information about comparable properties (or “comps”) to determine how much to offer.
10. **How your taxes will change:** While home ownership comes with additional expenses like taxes and interest fees associated with your mortgage, you may be able to deduct your mortgage interest and real estate property taxes come tax season. Consult with your tax advisor for details specific to your individual situation.

Ready to get started? Find out more about your financing options, the home-buying process and what you can afford by contacting one of our experienced loan consultants at (855) 550-8500