



# ***Home-Buying Process***

## ***Finding the House***

# Home-Buying Process: Finding the House

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Now that you have a checklist of what you are looking for (Work Sheet: Needs and Wants), you are ready to start looking at houses. You can look on your own by reading the real estate ads, driving around neighborhoods you like and looking for "For Sale" signs or attending open houses or home shows.

You also can consult a real estate professional. The section on selecting a real estate professional can help you determine if you want to work with a buyer's agent or a seller's agent. Discuss your checklist with your real estate professional so he or she can look for houses that meet your criteria in terms of price, location and other items.

As you look at houses, compare them to each other and to your needs and wants list. It is important to keep records because it is difficult to remember which house had the fireplace you liked and which had really great closets. Use the Home Shopping Checklist to keep records of the houses you like.

Take notes on your observations about the interior and exterior of the house, including your first impression. Be sure that you are reacting to the house itself, not the furniture or the décor. Train yourself to look critically at each house in terms of your needs. For example, in many model homes the doors have been removed, making rooms look larger than they are. Ask the real estate professionals and owners questions and expect satisfactory answers. However, remember they are trying to sell to you.

## What to look for:

### • The Neighborhood

Look at your list of what is important in a neighborhood. How well does the neighborhood meet those criteria, e.g., schools available, distance from work, public transportation, and whatever you designate as important? Are there many houses in the neighborhood for sale? How is the neighborhood zoned and are there any plans to change the zoning? A real estate professional should be able to answer that question or direct you to where you can find the information.

### • Physical Details

How does the house look? Does it fit in with the others in the neighborhood? Is it in good repair or are there obvious maintenance needs? What size is it e.g. number of square feet, bedrooms and baths? How big is the lot? Is the landscaping attractive and is it something you are willing to maintain? Is there adequate storage, garage or basement space?

### • Construction Details

The quality of the construction materials, craftsmanship and condition are important considerations. Ask questions if you are not familiar with the construction materials or design details. Stucco and adobe are common building materials in the Southwest. Flat, shingle and tile roof construction also are common.

Once you have found a house that interests you and are ready to proceed, use the information in the Sales Contract section to prepare an offer to purchase.

## Home Shopping Checklist Work Sheet

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Construction \_\_\_\_\_

General Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Asking Price: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Bed/Bath \_\_\_\_\_ Year Built: \_\_\_\_\_

Square Feet: \_\_\_\_\_ Lot Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Garage/Carport: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interior

Condition of Interior:      Excellent      Good      Poor

### Rooms:

#### Kitchen:

Stove/Oven \_\_\_\_\_ Refrigerator \_\_\_\_\_ Dishwasher \_\_\_\_\_

Garbage Disposal \_\_\_\_\_ Kitchen Size \_\_\_\_\_

Things you liked: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things you disliked: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bathroom(s): # \_\_\_\_\_ Full \_\_\_\_\_ Half \_\_\_\_\_ Three-quarter \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Master Bedroom:

Size \_\_\_\_\_ Flooring \_\_\_\_\_

Things you liked:

\_\_\_\_\_

Things you disliked:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bedroom 2-3:                      Size \_\_\_\_\_ Flooring \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Home Shopping Checklist Work Sheet (Cont.)

### Bedroom 4/Office:

Size \_\_\_\_\_ Flooring \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Utility Room: \_\_\_\_\_

General Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Exterior

Condition of Exterior:      Excellent      Good      Poor

Utilities: (City, County, Private)

Electric: \_\_\_\_\_ Gas: \_\_\_\_\_ Propane: \_\_\_\_\_ Water: \_\_\_\_\_

Cooling System: (Refrigerated Air) (Evaporative cooler) (Other) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Heating System: \_\_\_\_\_

### Neighborhood:

Local School(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Distance: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance to:

Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Daycare \_\_\_\_\_

Police Station \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Station \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### Yard:

Front Yard: Grass \_\_\_\_\_, Xeriscaping \_\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_

Back Yard: Grass \_\_\_\_\_, Xeriscaping \_\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: (Water Friendly) \_\_\_\_\_

## Home Shopping Checklist Work Sheet (Cont.)

### Additional Features:

Porch: \_\_\_\_\_ Deck: \_\_\_\_\_ Patio: \_\_\_\_\_ Storage Shed: \_\_\_\_\_

### General Comments:

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*This resource is one in a series on the Home-Buying Process which include:*

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### **Financial Readiness**

What Creditors Look For  
Finding Mortgage Money  
Types of Financial Institutions  
Mortgage Options  
Down Payment and Closing Costs  
Pre-Qualification or Pre-Approval

### **Factors to Consider in Housing Selection**

Personal Needs and Wants  
Location  
Type and Style of House  
Type of Construction  
Interior and Exterior Space  
Special Needs  
Building as an Option

### **Locating a House**

Finding the House  
Using Real Estate Professionals  
Buying Direct From Owner

### **The Sales Contract**

Components  
Acceptance

### **Home Inspections**

Reasons for Home Inspections  
Locating an Inspector  
What Inspections Include  
Limits of Liability

### **The Mortgage Process**

Loan Application Process  
Approval or Rejection  
The Mortgage Payment

### **Purchasing Homeowners Insurance**

Before You Start Looking for a Home  
Stability of the Insurance Company  
Costs and Coverage  
Customer Service

### **Warranties**

### **The Closing**

Preparation for Closing  
Final Walk Through  
Closing Day Procedures

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