

10 Steps to Home Ownership

The process of home ownership can seem daunting but the reward is a great investment. The San Diego Association of REALTORS (SDAR) offers these 10 steps with helpful tips to simplify the process of buying a home.

By Robert Kevane, 2011 President of the San Diego Association of REALTORS®

Step 1: Are you ready?

Get information about the existing market by reading statistics that organizations such as SDAR publish each month. Then set your goals: are you buying as a long or short-term investment?

Step 2: Be sure your agent is a REALTOR®

REALTORS® are agents who adhere to a strict code of ethics and belong to associations that give their REALTORS® access to exclusive tools and resources to help you through the maze of forms, financing, inspections, marketing, pricing and negotiation.

Step 3: Get loan pre-approval

REALTORS® suggest you start the mortgage process before previewing homes to ensure you are looking at homes within your price range and to be in the strongest position to negotiate as a pre-approved buyer.

Step 4: Look at more than just the home

Research all the aspects that may be important to you when picking a neighborhood such as crime statistics, local school and proximity to parks, shopping and freeways. Utilize your REALTOR® to make home suggestions that match all of your needs.

Step 5: Choose your home from many

Look at as many homes as possible. With the Internet you can quickly and easily view large numbers of homes, search a variety of prices, take video tours, go to open houses and view extensive neighborhood information.

Step 6: Get funding

Buyers often end up spending too much in interest and closing costs. Always research mortgage options and costs; A quality mortgage broker or loan specialist will be able to discuss all the various options available to you.

Step 7: Make the best offer

In a typical transaction, you will complete an offer that your REALTOR® will present to the seller and their REALTOR®. The seller will then, accept it, reject it or make a counter-offer.

Step 8: Have inspections & review disclosures

Before closing always get a professional home inspection. Also consider termite, pool,

roof and electrical inspections. Review the inspection reports and all of the disclosure documentation you receive from the owner, REALTORS® or homeowners association regarding local area, natural hazard, and lead paint among others.

Step 9: Get insurance

Real estate insurance protects owners in the event of catastrophe and can be the bargain of a lifetime. Make sure you also receive Title Insurance to protect against undisclosed liens and ensure that you have clear title to the property.

Step 10: Closing – know what to hold on to

Before closing, buyers typically have a final opportunity to walk through the property and assure that its condition has not changed since the purchase agreement was signed. The final step to closing is the recording of the Grant Deed at the County Recorder's Office. Remember that the papers you receive at settlement are extremely valuable – so hold on to them.

Last but not least, enjoy your home!