



# WORKING WITH FIRST-TIME BUYERS IN A HOT MARKET

Buying a home can be stressful for anyone, especially in today's super-charged market. For first-time buyers, who are committing to a long-term financial obligation and may be less familiar with what is typical or expected, it can be a truly daunting process.

Thankfully, they can rely on you, a knowledgeable agent with a pulse on the local market.

From the experts at the National Association of Realtors, here are a few tips on how you can best help your clients succeed in their quest to be first-time homeowners:

• **Maximize their advantage** - As first-time buyers, your clients may qualify for valuable government financial assists such as zero-down VA loans, low down payment FHA loans, or first-time buyer assistance. Knowing all the federal and local options can be extremely valuable.

• **Know their finances** - In order for their offer to be seriously considered, your buyers will need to be pre-approved for a loan. Be sure they can make any required down payment and that they understand their options, such as the ability to withdraw a lump sum of up to \$10,000 from an IRA without penalty.

• **Know what they can afford** - Use your market expertise to help your clients understand just how much home they can afford - and where. Will they consider a fixer-upper? Will

they compromise on location? How far out of the city are they willing to go?

• **Help guide decision-making** - Bidding on a home in today's extremely low inventory environment means making quick decisions. Staying on top of new listings and honing your negotiation skills will put your clients in the best position to find the right home.

• **Be a counselor** - A wise and caring agent will educate first-time buyers during the purchasing process about earnest money, contingencies, escrow or title issues, home inspections and other hurdles they may need to overcome before the transaction is complete.

• **Be accessible during the closing process** - What is routine to you may be stressful to your buyers. You will earn your customers' loyalty and respect if you ensure they understand what to expect during the closing process, from closing costs, to title insurance, to making mortgage payments and setting aside funds for property taxes.

Even after your buyers close, you can be a valuable resource by answering their questions, dropping off neighborhood information and referring them to honest and reliable contractors for painting and other home-improvement projects.

