



# HINTS FOR HOMEBUYERS

## Tips To Make You A Smart Homebuyer

(NAPSA)—The key to finding your dream home lies in preparation. Before you call an agent or take out a sizable loan, there are a number of things to consider. Here are a few tips to prepare you for the home buying process from MSN HomeAdvisor, a Web site which offers expert advice and services about the home, including improving, finding, selling, financing, refinancing and moving into homes.

The first step is evaluating your budget.

- **Calculating whether to rent or buy**

You may be better off renting if you expect to move or get transferred within two years.

- **Credit data**

Check your credit and correct any credit problems you may have before the lender gets your credit report.

- Figure out if you can afford to carry a monthly mortgage and still pay your bills.

A mortgage should take no more than one third of your net income.

- **Find out if you can get pre-approved**

Getting pre-approved gives you an estimate of how much you can borrow and puts you in a better position to buy.

Once you have secured your budget and are pre-approved for a loan it is time to begin house hunting.

- **Take a list of questions to ask when you see the house**

Get all the information you need to compare and contrast later. A beautiful Victorian may be a favorite until you revisit your notes and discover it needs new plumbing and wiring.

- **When you find a home that interests you, research the neighborhood**

Use HomeAdvisor to learn more about the area. Go on your own at different times of the day, and talk to neighbors and local businesses to get a feel for what it's like to live there.

If the neighborhood fulfills your needs, it is time to prepare



**When researching the neighborhood, go on your own at different times of the day.**

your offer.

- **Find out about current market conditions**

The more demand there is for housing, the more you can expect to pay. Research prices of comparable homes sold in the area recently.

- **Current value of the home**

Use HomeAdvisor to get an estimate.

- **Check Interest rates**

Interest rates tend to fluctuate. If interest rates are low, you may ask your lender to lock-in, or commit to that rate, that day.

- **Choose a loan**

You may think you want a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage, but an adjustable-rate mortgage may be more appropriate for your circumstances. Use HomeAdvisor to see if you qualify for special financing arrangements, such as lower down-payment requirements.

- **Estimate your closing costs**

Lenders are required to give good-faith estimates of closing costs within three days of a loan application.

- **Schedule a final walk-through**

Make certain the seller has completed any repairs specified in the purchase contract and has satisfied any other contingencies involving the home's condition.

For more information on all aspects of home buying go to [www.msnhomeadvisor.com](http://www.msnhomeadvisor.com).