

WHAT ARE YOUR HOME BUYING GOALS?

With the dramatic rise and fall of housing prices over the last decade, consumers have new respect for homes as investments. But the flip side, is that your investment is still a home, one you're likely to occupy for several years or more.

According to the annual Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, compiled by the National Association of REALTORS®, the primary reason buyers cite for purchasing a home is simply the desire to own, followed closely by the desire for more space, and a change in the family situation.

For most people, buying a home is more about giving household members more comfortable living arrangements and putting them closer to jobs, favorite activities, other family and friends.

What are your goals for buying a home? You might want a better home and neighborhood. You might want a different kind of living experience, such as moving from an apartment to a single-family home with a private garage and yard. Your family may be growing, so you have to think about school districts and proximity to parks and other recreation.

If you're not certain, you might think about what would change about your situation if you became a homeowner.

You'll definitely be more established. If you're like most homebuyers, you expect to stay in your new home about 10 years.

You'll also build equity for yourself, instead of for someone else. Every payment you make, plus the rules of inflation will eventually allow you to recoup most if not all of your investment, or make a profit when you sell.

Affordability may also be an important factor for you. The combination of low interest rates and low prices allows you to buy more home for the money. Rents are rising, making ownership more affordable than renting in many areas, especially when you factor in tax incentives such as mortgage interest deductions and property taxes allowable as deductions against your income.

When you buy, make your goals long-term. Choose the home you think will serve your household's needs the best for the longest period of time, as it's been proven that the longer you own a home, the more equity you'll build. Today's market conditions and affordability make it more likely that you will reach your home buying goals, no matter what they are.