

If you are transitioning from renter to homeowner, the prospect of making such a large investment may be exciting, while at the same time overwhelming. Higgins Group Real Estate has put together some easy steps to make this exciting process a smooth one for you:

Understand the home buying process.

1. Educate yourself.

Find a local homebuyer seminar that you can attend or research one online. [Realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com) has great information and handy tools to help you. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Web site (www.hud.gov) has an entire section devoted to homebuyers with common questions of first-time homebuyers, mortgage and home-buying programs information, and useful tools for you to download.

2. Work with a strong Agent

Finding the right agent to work with you every step of the way is a critical step in the journey toward homeownership. At Higgins Group Real Estate, we pride ourselves on the quality and integrity of our agents, and we know we have given them the absolute best training and resources available to help you at this exciting time.

3. Ask questions?

There are many facets and intricacies to the home buying process, so although you may gain a basic knowledge, you will still have questions. Don't hesitate to let your Higgins Group REALTOR® know that you are new to the process. He or she will expect you to have questions at each step—from house hunting, to making an offer to the closing. Remember, this is one of the largest financial transactions of your life, so you want to have a clear understanding of what's going on.

4. Take a lot of deep breaths.

Don't feel like you have to make an offer on the first home you see. Buyers, especially first-timers, may be impressed by the first two or three homes they view. Look at a good selection. List the positives and negatives about each home. Narrow the prospects to three or four and then return for a closer look. When you decide to make a bid on a property, work with your real estate professional to get all of your questions answered before making an offer. But don't wait too long to make an offer. The longer you wait, the greater the chance other prospective buyers may place offers, making it harder for you to negotiate a good deal.

5. Focus on your price range.

Before beginning your home search, make sure you get pre-qualified to so get an idea of how much you may be able to borrow without it, you really have no power to move forward in a transaction. Use this information as a starting point in determining your price range. Then take into consideration other factors that will affect your monthly budget once you are a homeowner, such as property taxes, homeowners insurance, utilities, private mortgage insurance (PMI) and maintenance.

6. Plan ahead.

Think about personal changes you are planning in the next five to seven years. For instance, are you starting a family, and if so, is the home large enough and will it continue to be? If this will be a starter home or if you think you'll be relocating in a few years, you'll probably want to pay closer attention to appreciation and resale value. If a double-income is necessary to qualify for financing and to make your payments, do your plans foresee an income sufficient to continue making payments?

7. Focus on location.

Don't just focus on the house itself. Walk or drive the area. Examine the community and schools. Many Fairfield County towns have extremely different and diverse neighborhoods, even though they may be right next to each other in the same town. Does the neighborhood suit your lifestyle? Is the area convenient for commuting, well-maintained, close to work, stores and schools? Find out about zoning and what new construction is planned on vacant land in the immediate area. Ask your Agent to compare this area with that one, and work to arrive at a well-formed decision.

Above all, remember knowledge is key. No question is a silly question. Your Higgins Group Real Estate professional will be an invaluable asset throughout the process. Making smart home buying decisions will make the home-buying process less scary and your first home purchase a rewarding experience.

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