



Welcome to our Village! Buying a new home is a big deal. We understand that it can be both exciting and overwhelming. This is why it is extremely important to educate yourself to have the best possible outcome and experience. We are here to support you. You will be part of our village as you transition to yours! Below are some tips on how to get started. If at any point you feel lost or confused, just reach out! We can be reached at info@villagelawgroup.com or 919-525-2854.

Use a Trusted Attorney and Realtor.

You will need a village of professionals to help you navigate your real estate journey. Each profession has its own attributes and knowledge of the real estate process and therefore the best option is to hire both an Attorney and a Realtor.

Your Realtor will be able to provide valuable information and guidance about the market, the neighborhoods, the school districts, and can negotiate on your behalf. They will be able to spot defects in the home, negotiate for repairs and a dozen other tasks that will be required to get the Offer to Purchase to a Contract and then to Closing.

Your Attorney will be able to provide legal protections and advice that only a competent attorney can provide. They will be able to advise you on how you should hold title to the property, how an easement can affect your ownership and ensure that the title will pass as a *clear marketable title*. If the Offer to Purchase requires terms that are not included in the standardized Offer, only an Attorney can draft those special terms. Your Attorney will complete all the legal tasks required to get the Offer to Purchase to a Contract and get you to and through Closing.

Consider your long-term plan and think about the commitment.

Most buyers “fall in love” with a house and are positive that is the house for them. You will need to leave your heart at the door and buy with your long-term plan in mind. You also need to consider the commitment to the house.

Are you planning on a career change? Getting Married? Having kids? Getting a pet? Starting a home business? Before you begin your house search, you will want to identify your current needs and your future needs. Depending on the market and the terms of your mortgage, it may take five to seven years to gain real equity in your home. This could impact the need to sell quickly and purchase a new home that works for your new situation. The home you choose should be the home for you for several years.

Your commitment to your potential home is another important factor that can influence your purchase. Think beyond the commitment of the mortgage. If you buy a house with your significant other who is not your spouse, make sure you have thought about what would happen if your relationship does not last. When you are married the laws in North Carolina can affect how your assets are treated upon death or divorce. Thinking long-term, even about things that are unpleasant, is a necessity. Discussing these types of issues with your Attorney will help the attorney advise you on how to best prepare. It could be something as simple as holding title to the property in a certain way or perhaps a legal agreement that outlines the titling to your home, how the mortgage payments will be handled, will the home be sold and the profit split, etc.

Determine your “must haves” and your “would be nice to haves”.

We recommend that you make a list of the features that are important to you and that will help support your lifestyle now and in the future. We have developed a Home Wish List. The Wish List will help you identify and catalog your desired features and rate them with a level of importance. It is likely that you will tour

many houses, which could make it difficult to remember the pros and cons of each one. To assist with this process, we created a Home Comparisons Worksheet. Fill out a Worksheet for each home while you are touring the home. Then when you are done touring you can use the information you collected on each Worksheet to determine which house is the house for you.

Buy what you can afford.

What you can afford may be a different number from the purchase price approval issued by the bank. Some lenders suggest that your home costs should be about 1/3 of your gross income. We recommend using a more conservative approach by using 28% of your income to set your home cost budget. Home costs consist of mortgage payments, homeowner's insurance, real property taxes, and possibly homeowner association dues. Depending on the type of loan you qualify for you may have mortgage insurance, which would also be consider a home cost. We recommend that you review your current debt too. Consider the type of debt, such as student loans. Are the student loans currently deferred? What is the loan payment and how long will it take you to pay off the debt? Additionally, you will want to think about potential home improvements and/or repairs that you may want to make to your new home. You will need to set a budget to invest in the improvements and/or repairs. Your long-term plans can also impact your decision. What changes may happen that will affect your income – having kids, buying a new car, starting a new business, etc. Remember, don't shop with your heart, shop with you mind and be guided by **your** monthly budget.

Look beyond the paint and the layout.

While you will want to get a home inspection by a qualified inspector, we recommend that you use all of your senses when exploring a house. Take a flashlight to look under the beds, look in the closets for any evidence of rodents, look at the pipes under the sinks, look in the crawl space and the attic, and yes, smell the carpets. If you “fall in love” with a house and make an Offer to

Purchase that is accepted you will have to pay the [due diligence fee](#) to the seller upon signing of the Contract. The due diligence fee is non-refundable and can range in price from \$100 to \$500 or higher. If you take the time to do your own “mini inspection” before making an offer it may help you discover potential problems that may help you decide to move on to the next house. We have created a checklist for things you should investigate during your home tour. Using this checklist will help you remain objective about the house.

We would be honored to be part of your village! Utilizing our services will allow you to close with confidence by knowing that we have taken the necessary steps to provide you with legal protections and sound advice.

Good luck finding your new home. Remember, you already have a village!