

Open House Tips for Potential Homebuyers

Open houses have been a staple for home listings for decades. Often these are attended by people just driving by on a weekend day or neighbors curious about pricing and upgrades, but they can also be a strategic aspect of searching for a new home. Often overlooked, potential home buyers can use public open houses to explore communities and homes and by following a few tips, find a great new home.

Open House Tips for Buyers

- **Research Online First** – Most open houses are advertised on public website search sites. Review options and pictures ahead of time.
- **Limit Your Options** – Don't overload by trying to see too many homes in a day. It's hard to remember details if you see more than 4-5 homes.
- **Make a Good Impression** – Take the tours seriously. Be organized, dress appropriately, and be knowledgeable about the property.
- **Questions** – Come with questions about the home. Ask about the community, schools, upgrades, repairs, and why the home is being sold.
- **Ask for Information and Disclosures** – Ask to see current property tax and association fee information. Ask to review the disclosure documents while you're there.
- **Perform a Visual Inspection** – Take pictures and note any obvious signs of deferred maintenance or repair issues. Look at the roof, walls, drainage, windows, doors, and garage for signs of damage or water intrusion.

Finally, remember that the listing agent is first and foremost responsible to the seller. Avoid providing any information that could be used in a negotiation. Strongly consider using a dedicated buyer's agent if you

decide to make an offer so that your interests are protected. The listing agent may offer discounts, but having a fiduciary on your side could save you a lot more money in the long run.