



Selecting a Real Estate Agent

As a buyer, it is important to choose a real estate agent who is right for you. Your agent should be someone you are comfortable around, can trust, and are confident will work in your best interests. Plan on working with only one agent as most have access to information on all current home listings in the area.

It is beneficial to interview several agents before making your choice. The following questions may help you with your decision:

1. **Who do you prefer to represent in real estate transactions?** Find out if the agent prefers to work for the seller or the buyer. (Also, be familiar with Maryland's "Understanding Whom Real Estate Agents Represent" policy.)
2. **How many years of experience do you have as an agent?** As in any industry, an agent that has been in business longer is likely to know more. This is not to say that they are more competent, but since every real estate transaction is unique, they may have a broader range of experience to draw from.
3. **What are your hours and how much time will you be able to spend with me?** Depending on how anxious you are to find a home, consider who might be able to devote more time to helping you. Also, are the agent's hours compatible with the time you have available to meet with them, look at houses, or to answer your calls?
4. **How long have you lived in this area?** This is an important question to find out how well your agent may be familiar with local neighborhoods and services.
5. **Explain to us how you will work with us.** Make sure the agent's description of the buying process feels comfortable to you.
6. **Will you handle all aspects of my transaction or will you work with another agent or administrative assistant?** If the latter is the case, make sure you interview both agents and assistant. It is important to understand what responsibilities each person will be handling throughout the process.
7. **What do you do to stay current in your field?** Having, or working towards, additional credentials, taking continuing education (CE) classes, reading, and being active in real estate organizations are good indicators of an agent's interest in staying up to date.
8. **Check an agent's references.** You can do this by asking for the names and phone numbers of several buyers in the past 12 months. Calling some of these people is a good way to get an honest opinion about the agent's service.

Questions you may want to ask a reference:

1. Is the agent trustworthy and honest?
2. Was the agent available when you needed him or her?
3. Were any problems resolved in a timely manner?
4. Did the agent explain the buying process clearly and concisely?
5. Would you use the agent again?