



# ***Deciding to Buy a Home***

## ***Needs and Wants***

# Deciding to Buy a Home: Needs and Wants

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The home-buying decision will be affected by a combination of needs and wants and how long you plan to live in the home.

- **Needs.** Needs are possibly the most important factor affecting your housing decision. Needs are things you must have to survive and live adequately such as food, clothing and a place to live. Housing is a basic physical need but it is often influenced by psychological factors such as a need for beauty, self-expression and creativity. Your housing needs will likely change over time. For example, you might need more room if you have more children or an added room to have a parent live with you. After retirement you might want to downsize to a smaller house that is less costly to maintain.
- **Wants.** Wants are things you desire. One of your wants may be a big house with an elaborate gourmet kitchen or one with a large lot for children and pets. It is natural to include wants along with needs. These are important in finding the right house for you.

## Lifestyle - Needs and Wants

Owning a home is part of a lifestyle or pattern of living. You express many of the needs and wants of your lifestyle in the home you choose. If you have dreamed about what you would like in a house, the way to start making it a reality is to make a list of things you feel you need or would like to have in your house. The *Needs and Wants Work Sheet* can help you create your home

lifestyle by building a wish list of the important things to look for in a house. Use it to begin shopping for your home.

Involve everyone who will live in the house in determining what goes on the list. Have each member of the household fill out a copy of the Needs and Wants Work Sheet. Also, make a note of things you do not want. After completing the work sheet, review it to determine which things are most important and on which items you can compromise.

Use an ABC priority system to rank the importance of every item. Items you list as "A" are must haves. Items with a "B" are highly desirable but you may not have to have. Some of these may make the final list based on various compromises. Last are the "C" items that you may consider frills or wishes that do not seem affordable right now. Since this is your wish list, you can always change your mind later and move items from one priority to another. Using a priority system can help you make compromises about various features of the house.

There are numerous options to consider in determining what you desire in a house. You might want to think about what a house means to you. Keep in mind how long you plan to live there. Do you consider your house a place to live, an investment or a status symbol?

## Other things to consider are:

- **Size.** Think about the amount and kind of

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space you need. Take into account the number, ages and gender of those who will live in the house.

- **Location.** What kind of a neighborhood are you looking for? Do you want to be close to certain schools? How far is the commute to work? Is there convenient shopping? Are medical and dental care facilities conveniently located? Is there access to public transportation?
- **Living Rooms.** Do you need formal and informal living spaces? Do you entertain frequently or need space for large family gatherings? If a grandparent or other relative will live with the family, a separate quiet space for him or her may be desirable.
- **Bedrooms.** How many bedrooms do you need? Young children might need different space than teenagers. Two boys might share a room but you might want separate rooms if there is a boy and a girl. Do you have frequent guests and need a guest room? Does someone in the family work at home and need a room for a home office?
- **Kitchen/Dining Area.** Do you want a large kitchen where the family can gather, a smaller kitchen and a family room with an eating area, or a separate dining room?
- **Bathrooms.** How many bathrooms do you need/want? Is it important the bathroom(s) has/have a shower or bathtub or both? This may depend on the number of people living in the house.
- **Landscaping.** Do you want a big yard? What kind of landscaping do you want and how much time are you willing to spend to keep it up?
- **Technology.** Do you want your house wired for television and computer technology, security systems or home management?

- **Special Features.** Are there other features you want such as a fireplace, home theater, pool, room for a grand piano or other large pieces of furniture, extra storage such as a larger garage or room to park a recreational vehicle?
- **Systems/Utilities.** Other things you may want to consider are types and cost of utilities available, heating and cooling systems and projected maintenance and upkeep.

These factors affect the location, size and layout of the house, the type and style of house, and the amenities desired. It is not always possible to find a house in your price range that meets everything on your list. Knowing what you are looking for will help narrow your search and help you work with real estate professionals.

### Identify Special Needs

Besides the items on the Needs and Wants Work Sheet, you may need to include factors that affect persons with special needs. If someone in your household uses a wheelchair, has a sight or hearing impairment or has any other special needs you should look for features which meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards such as wider doorways and lower counter tops. If you are considering an existing house, it may already have these features. If not, you should consider the cost associated with remodeling or installing these items.

It might be affordable to make the appropriate upgrades in some houses, while in others it may be too costly. Consult a design professional, builder or remodeling company familiar with ADA standards and Universal Design principles to help you deal with modifications for special needs.

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Some items to be considered include the following:

- Wheelchair ramps
- Custom handrails and bars
- Specially designed toilets and bathroom fixtures
- Special locks and viewing devices for exterior doors
- Special shelving and kitchen cabinetry
- Special wiring
- Wider doorways
- Right or left-handed access and use

When you start shopping, this list will help you decide if any of the houses are a good match.

By looking only at houses that meet your needs, you will save time, energy and frustration.

Determining how much house you can afford also will help you find good matches.

## Needs and Wants Work Sheet

Type of Home:      New \_\_\_\_\_ Older \_\_\_\_\_ Manufactured \_\_\_\_\_

Living Space:      No less than \_\_\_\_\_(Sq Ft)                      No more than \_\_\_\_\_(Sq Ft)

Price Range:      No less than \_\_\_\_\_                      No more than \_\_\_\_\_

School District:      \_\_\_\_\_

Style of home:      Ranch\_\_\_\_\_      Adobe      \_\_\_\_\_      Southwest \_\_\_\_\_

                         Colonial \_\_\_\_\_      Townhouse      \_\_\_\_\_      Condominium \_\_\_\_\_

                         Two or more stories \_\_\_\_\_                      Other \_\_\_\_\_

Renovation you will consider doing:    A little? \_\_\_\_\_      A lot      \_\_\_\_\_      None      \_\_\_\_\_

Close to public transportation      \_\_\_\_\_Yes      \_\_\_\_\_No

Must meet ADA Standards:      \_\_\_\_\_Yes      \_\_\_\_\_No

Subdivision Options:      \_\_\_\_\_

Need                      Want                      No Preference      Not an Option

**Interior:**

***Rooms***

*Master Bedroom:*

Size	_____	_____	_____	_____
Bathroom	_____	_____	_____	_____
Carpet	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ceramic Tile	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hardwood Floors	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Needs and Wants Work Sheet (cont.)

	Need	Want	No Preference	Not an Option
<i>Kitchen</i>				
Appliances	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Eat-in-kitchen	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Bathrooms:</i>				
Bathroom #	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spa	_____	_____	_____	_____
Flooring	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Other:</i>				
Utility Room	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extra Dining Room	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extra Living Room	_____	_____	_____	_____
Second Floor	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fireplace	_____	_____	_____	_____
Woodstove	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Needs and Wants Work Sheet (cont.)**

	Need	Want	No Preference	Not an Option
<b>Exterior:</b>				
Lot Size	_____	_____	_____	_____
Porch	_____	_____	_____	_____
Deck	_____	_____	_____	_____
Patio	_____	_____	_____	_____
Swimming Pool	_____	_____	_____	_____
Storage Shed	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>Landscaping</i>				
Front Yard	_____	_____	_____	_____
Back Yard	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other features house must have: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*This resource is one in a series on Deciding to Buy a Home which include:*

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Needs and Wants

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The Cost of a Home

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### **Types of Homeownership**

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