**Steps for First-Time Homebuyers:**

Buying your first home is a big milestone, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you navigate the process:

1. Assess Your Finances & Set a Budget:

* Review Income & Expenses: Understand your monthly take-home pay, recurring expenses, and existing debts like credit cards or student loans.
* Calculate Your Debt-to-Income Ratio (DTI): This ratio (total monthly debt payments divided by gross monthly income) helps lenders assess your ability to repay a loan. Aim for a DTI below 43%, though some lenders accept higher ratios.
* Determine Your Down Payment: The amount you can put down upfront influences your loan options and monthly payments. While 20% down avoids Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) on conventional loans, many first-time homebuyers put down less, sometimes as little as 3% to 5%. Consider down payment assistance programs if needed.
* Factor in Additional Costs: Remember to budget for closing costs (2% to 5% of the purchase price), property taxes, homeowners insurance, and potential Homeowners Association (HOA) fees.

2. Contact USAUnidos and Get Pre-Approved for a Mortgage:

* Understand Pre-Approval: This is a more thorough evaluation than pre-qualification, involving a lender's review of your credit and finances to determine how much you may be eligible to borrow.
* Gather Necessary Documents: You'll need proof of income, asset statements, employment verification, identification, and your Social Security number.
* Strengthen Your Offer: A pre-approval letter shows sellers you're a serious buyer, potentially giving you an advantage in a competitive market.

3. Find the Right Home with our Accredited Buyer’s Representative

* An experienced agent will guide you through the process, help you find properties within your budget, and assist with making an offer.
* Define Your Needs & Wants: Consider location, property size, type of home, and features that are important to you.
* Begin Your Home Search: Browse online listings, attend open houses, and explore potential neighborhoods.

4. Make an Offer & Negotiate:

* Craft a Competitive Offer: Your representative will help you determine a suitable offer price based on market conditions and the home's value.
* Include Contingencies: Consider including contingencies, such as a home inspection or financing contingency, to protect your earnest money deposit if the sale doesn't proceed.
* Negotiate with the Seller: Be prepared to negotiate on price, repairs, or other terms to reach a mutually agreeable outcome.

5. Complete Inspections & Appraisal:

* Schedule a Home Inspection: A thorough inspection is crucial to identify potential issues with the property.
* Get an Appraisal: Your lender will require an appraisal to ensure the home's value supports the loan amount.
* Review Disclosures: We Carefully examine any seller disclosures about known problems or defects.

6. Finalize Mortgage & Secure Homeowners Insurance:

* Work with us: Provide any additional documents requested by the underwriter to finalize your loan approval.
* Obtain Homeowners Insurance: Our Insurance specialists will guide you in this process.

7. Prepare for Closing:

* Understand Escrow: Escrow ensures a neutral third party holds funds and documents until all conditions are met.
* Review the Closing Disclosure: This document outlines your finalized closing costs and loan terms.
* Do a Final Walkthrough: Confirm the property is in the agreed-upon condition.

8. Close on the Home:

* Sign Documents & Pay Fees: You'll sign all the necessary paperwork, pay closing costs, and transfer the title.
* Receive the Keys: Congratulations, you're officially a homeowner!