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Welcome! With what seems like an extra early spring in New England, we're seeing lots of *for sale* signs pop up along with the daffodils. Traditionally, spring is the best time to sell your house. So, if you're thinking of putting yours on the market, we have some tips for you.

Good luck, and if you have any questions or need help, remember we're here to help you stay *On Course!*

-Jennifer Lane, CFP

Selling Your House

The economy has created a buyer's market, but home sales are definitely up over last year. Realtor.org reported that February 2012 homes sales were up 8.8 percent over February 2011.

Before you begin, go to Homebuying.about.com, which is a great site that has good information that will guide you.

Realtor's Advice

- Time to call in the professionals. Have one – or even three – realtors come in and assess your home. They know the market and will be able to advise on how to proceed.
- Check out Realtor.org, which has a section for home buyers and sellers to educate yourself before talking with the realtor.

Home Inspection

- Yes, you can do one yourself!
- You will uncover any potential problems so you can take care of them and smooth the sales process.
- Offer the report to prospective buyers as a nice benefit.

Pricing Realistically

- Look at Zillow.com. It's what potential buyers are doing so you need to be prepared.
- While it may sting, accept what the probable price range is for your house.
- Pricing the house to sell will attract more traffic and move the house more quickly.

Preparing the House

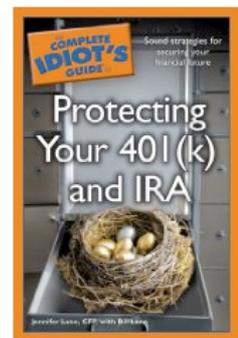
- Spruce up. For example, new paint, new carpets, and finally repairing things you may have neglected will make a difference. Avoid major renovations at this point. Buyers will probably want to redo kitchens and bathrooms to suit



Jennifer's Hint

The first \$10,000 distribution from your IRA or your 401(k) or 403(b) to buy, build, or rebuild a first home is exempt from the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty. This exemption applies to a first home that you, your spouse, your children, your grandchildren, or your parents can own.

Get more tips in Jennifer's book



(click here for link)

Helpful Websites

BankRate.com

Homebuying.about.com

Realtor.org

their own taste. It's also unlikely that you'll get any energy rebates as they've pretty much gone away.

- Declutter and depersonalize. Get a storage unit and transfer as much as you can to make the house show well. This includes closets and cabinets!
- Investigate hiring a professional stager. Stagers who know how to prepare a house can justify their cost with a faster, easier sale.

Zillow.com



Q&A

Q: I'm recently married, and my husband and I would like to buy a home soon. We are not sure whether our jobs will stay in the area, but rates are so low now, wouldn't it be a good investment to buy, lock in the rate, and then rent out our property later?

-- Stephanie, Winchester

A: It might be, Stephanie, but you need to think about this as an investment rather than a home purchase. Your purchasing criteria might be different since you will not be staying in the house long term. Check the mortgage documents carefully. Some mortgages have a clause that stipulates the lender can change the rate if the home converts to a commercial property. And, last, while you live there, test different management resources. Pretend you are the tenant and assess who can manage and maintain the property when you move.

What's New

- In case you missed it, Jennifer contributed to an article on [BostonParentsPaper.com](#). Click [here](#) to read *Surviving a Stalled Economy: Strategies for Families*.
- Jennifer's Compass. If you're still working on your taxes, check out Jennifer's [blog](#) for several NECN segments on filing income taxes this year.
- We now have a Facebook page. Visit www.facebook.com/AskJennifer and like us!
- Jennifer appears on NECN every other Monday morning at 9:30 am in addition to her Tuesday 5:00 pm and 6:30 pm appearances. And, until April 18, Jennifer is on at 7:30 am for Tax Day!

[Compass Planning Associates](#) helps families, individuals, and small-business clients achieve financial security, knowledge, and control over their money. Our **fee-only, client-centered approach** provides education and guidance for achieving financial goals and dreams.

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