

Home Seller's Guide

Presented by: Community
Title & Escrow



Hire a Real Estate Agent

Working with a top, experienced real estate agent is crucial to the successful sale of your home. A good agent will protect your interests and resolve any problems that arise, ensuring a stress free process. You can rely on a good real estate agent to:

- Suggest home improvements that will yield a high ROI
- Share insider knowledge on industry and local market trends
- Strategically price and market your home for maximum exposure
- Negotiate the best deal and terms on your behalf
- Simplify the entire process for you, including negotiations, inspections, title issues, etc.
- Show your home and keep you informed and updated at all times
- Assist in finding service providers (appraisers, inspectors, contractors, etc.)
- Promptly present and evaluate each offer with you
- Manage contracts, paperwork, and transactional details
- Offer advice, education, and guidance to serve your best interests
- Complete the transaction and sell your home per your agreement



Preparing Your Home for Sale

- Consult with your agent to determine which home improvement projects will yield the highest ROI
- Get a home inspection done early so you have the opportunity to identify and address/fix any problems.
- Repaint interior with neutral colors - they appeal to most buyers
- Remove old, dated wallpaper
- Fix light fixtures and switches and replace old light bulbs
- Patch up holes in walls from artwork and repair cracks
- Make sure windows and doors open, close, and lock securely
- Make sure the AC and the heat work
- Repair leaky faucets and toilets
- Inspect smoke detectors, security alarms, and sprinkler system



Curb Appeal



- Weed, mow, rake, and water the lawn; trim bushes and trees
- Store away garden tools and neatly wrap the hose
- Power wash your driveway to remove any oil stains
- Add flowering plants to the front yard
- Remove debris from the gutters and the roof
- Clean ponds, fountains, and pool
- Clean barbeque grill and any outdoor furniture
- Buy a new welcome mat for the front door
- Replace exterior lighting fixtures and hardware
- Replace house numbers -be sure they're visible from the street



Preparing Your Home for Showings

- Consider hiring a professional Home Staging company to showcase your home's best features and impress buyers. Studies show that buyers pay more for staged homes, so it's likely you'll recoup your costs and command a higher sale price.
- Introduce accent colors via accessories (pillows, throws, etc.)
- Place fresh, new towels and hand soap in bathrooms
- Place a table runner and formal dining setting on your table
- Display fresh flower arrangements throughout the home



Preparing Your Home for Showings



- Host a garage sale and/or sell items you don't need on sites like Craigslist.org
- Store away magazines, books, children's toys, games, etc.
- Remove family photos and any potentially offensive items
- Place valuable items like jewelry and money in a secure place
- Organize closets and storage space - buyers like to peek inside during Open Houses!



Preparing Your Home for Showings

- Flooring: shampoo, vacuum, and clean carpets and rugs (or replace them); wax and refinish hardwood floors
- Bathroom: wash or replace shower curtains; treat any mildew or mold; clear vanity tops of all personal toiletries
- Kitchen: clean countertops and store away small appliances; remove artwork and magnets from the refrigerator; don't pack too much food in the refrigerator; empty trash to eliminate odors
- Dust off furniture, light fixtures, blinds, and other surfaces
- Wash windows; wash (or replace) worn window curtains
- Keep beds made and consider buying new bedding



Showing Your Home



- For Open Houses: Eliminate any odors (pets, food, cigarette); Use an air freshener or scented candles. Offer refreshments like sodas, water, cookies, etc.
- Keep your home accessible and ready for frequent showings
- Allow a lockbox on your door so the buyer's agent can enter your home using a unique code instead of a key
- Stay away during open houses so buyers feel comfortable touring your home and giving feedback to your agent
- Open drapes and blinds and let the light in
- Set a comfortable temperature for the home
- Play soft background music to drown out any nearby traffic noise



Evaluating Offers

Congratulations you have offers! Your realtor will help you evaluate each offer and approach each one as an opportunity to negotiate.

- You have 3 choices when you get an offer for your home: Accept, Reject or Counter-Offer
- Multiple offers: Don't be tempted to take the highest offer - it's not always the best one!
- Don't reveal your personal circumstances - it may compromise your position and end up costing you thousands!
- For each offer, carefully review and evaluate:
 - Proposed offer price
 - Pre-approval or pre-qualification letter
 - Contingencies (financing, appraisal, inspections, repairs, etc.)
 - Earnest money deposit
 - Proposed closing date
 - Expiration date of offer



Evaluating Offers

- The following contingencies may be attached to an offer:
- Buyer securing financing
- Contractual promises, such as repairs and buyer incentives
- A title search to ensure there aren't any claims against the title
- Title Insurance to protect against any mistakes and errors
- Home appraisal requested by lender to ensure the home's sale price justifies the loan amount
- Buyer selling their home first - you can counter with a "Removal of Sale Contingency"
- Review of home owner association documents
- Buyer's home inspection and final walkthrough



Closing Costs

Congratulations! You are about to close on the sale of your home!

- REAL ESTATE AGENT COMMISSIONS
 - As the seller, you will be paying the entire commission, to be split between the buyer's agent and yours. This is covered in your signed Listing Agreement.
- TRANSFER TAX
 - Your county or city may require you to pay transfer taxes as a percentage of sale price. Transfer tax varies depending on state, county.
- CLOSING COSTS OR CREDITS TO THE BUYER
 - You might have agreed to pay various standard costs associated with closing the deal, such as lender fees, home appraisal cost, recording and transfer of the property, Homeowners and Title Insurance, and more.
- HOME WARRANTY FOR THE BUYER
 - Many sellers buy a home warranty on the buyer's behalf. This is a service contract (cost: ~\$500) that covers repairs to appliances and certain systems within the house for the first year of ownership.



Closing Expenses

CAPITAL GAINS, consult your tax advisor on this topic to get specifics

- If you're selling your primary home and you earn less than \$250,000 on your home sale (or \$500,000 if you're married and filing jointly), you will not owe capital gains tax. If you earn more, research to see what you owe.
- If your property is an investment property, then you're obligated to pay the capital gains tax unless you are doing a 1031 exchange.
- MOVING COSTS
 - While it may be tempting to save some money by asking friends and family to help you move, it's best to hire a moving company to take care of all your moving needs. Research and reserve a reputable mover and confirm your moving date, costs, and other details. If you're moving long-distance, consider enlisting a Relocation Specialist or relocation company to assist you



Prepare for Closing Day

- Schedule closing with your title company. Let the closer know if you prefer to pre-sign or attend closing with the buyer
- Provide contact information for an association, if applicable
- Mortgage payoff statement. Your closer will help you obtain the payoff documents but they will need your authorization to contact your lender(s)
- Provide the title company documents to clear title, divorce decree, satisfactions, death certificates, etc.
- Stop any automatic payments for mortgages, association, and utilities for the property
- Contact all the utilities and provide your forwarding address



Moving Checklist

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE MOVE

- Make arrangements to hire a mover or rent a truck
- Make babysitting and/or pet care arrangements for moving day
- File a change of address form at the post office
- Change address on all newspaper and magazine subscriptions
- Transfer medical, property, fire and auto insurance
- Organize all move-related documents in one place, such as a folder or binder

TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MOVE

- Cancel or transfer all utilities (water, gas, electric, telephone, TV/cable/satellite/Internet service)
- Check with your provider about cell phone service in your new location
- Collect or purchase all packing supplies; boxes, wrapping paper, bubble wrap, labels, markers, box cutters or scissors and packing tape
- Pack up items in garage, attic and storage areas
- Confirm arrangements with movers or truck rental place



Moving Checklist

ONE WEEK BEFORE THE MOVE

- Begin packing boxes, labeling each as you fill it
- Empty, defrost and clean refrigerator, freezer and stove

THE DAY BEFORE THE MOVE

- Do a final check of closets, cabinets and drawers
- Take out all trash
- Touch base with movers or truck rental place for a final confirmation of arrangements

THE DAY OF THE MOVE

- Exchange contact information with the movers.
- Keep jewelry and other valuables with you, in a box that you move yourself
- Prepare a box of supplies that you will need right away on move-in day, such as cleaning supplies, snacks and beverages, toilet, bath and bedding items, trash bags, disposable dishes, pet food, cell phone chargers, prescriptions, eyeglasses, changes of clothing, etc.
- Do a final check before locking the doors. Have you turned over or left the keys and controls for garage door opener to your agent/buyer?

