

Before You Sell – Texas Edition

Considering Your Selling Options

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Welcome!

I created this guide because selling a home involves many decisions, and understanding the process beforehand can help you approach those decisions with confidence. Many homeowners focus on one question, "How much can I sell my home for?" without fully understanding the many decisions that can influence their experience and financial outcome.

My goal isn't to convince you to hire me. It's to help you understand the home-selling process so you can confidently navigate it on your own and make informed decisions.

Before discussing pricing, marketing, and negotiations, let's start by understanding whether selling is the right next step for you.

PHASE 1 — PLANNING YOUR SALE

Step 1: Before You Decide to Sell

Before putting your home on the market, it's worth taking a step back and considering all your options.

Selling isn't the only path available to homeowners. Depending on your financial goals and circumstances, alternatives such as renting the property, accessing available equity, refinancing, or other strategies may better align with your long-term plans.

Because these decisions involve personal financial, tax, and investment considerations, they're best discussed with qualified financial, tax, and legal professionals.

This guide focuses specifically on the home-selling process so you can understand what to expect if selling is the path you decide is right for you.

Step 2: Decide if You're Ready to Sell

If you've decided selling is the right path, having clear goals from the beginning will make the rest of the process much easier.

Your priorities will influence decisions such as your pricing strategy, how much preparation you're willing to do, your preferred timeline, and the type of buyer you hope to attract.

Before moving forward, consider:

- What does a successful sale look like for me?
- How much flexibility do I have with my timeline?
- Am I willing to make repairs or updates before listing?
- What are my plans after the sale?

There isn't a "right" reason to sell. Understanding your priorities early will help you make more confident decisions throughout the process.

Step 3: Estimate Your Home's Value

The answer isn't determined by what you paid for it, how much you've invested in upgrades, or what a neighbor's home sold for several years ago. Your home's market value is based on what a willing buyer is likely to pay under current market conditions.

Estimating your home's value helps you:

- Develop a pricing strategy
- Estimate your equity
- Plan your next purchase
- Determine whether selling makes financial sense

Understanding Comparable Sales

Real estate values are primarily driven by comparable properties, often called "comps."

The most useful comps are homes that are similar to yours in:

- Neighborhood
- Size
- Age
- Floor plan

- Lot size
- Condition
- Features
- Upgrades

When researching comparable properties, prioritize them in this order:

Recently Sold Homes

Recently sold homes provide the strongest indication of market value because they show what buyers were willing to pay.

Whenever possible, focus on homes that sold within the past three to six months and closely resemble your property.

Pending Sales

Pending homes have accepted offers but haven't closed yet.

Although the final sales price usually isn't public until closing, pending properties provide valuable insight into what buyers are willing to purchase in today's market. They often reflect market conditions more accurately than older closed sales.

Active Listings

Active listings represent your current competition. Not necessarily market value.

These homes show what other sellers are asking, but they haven't found a buyer yet. Some may be priced appropriately, while others may be overpriced or underpriced.

When reviewing active listings, consider:

- Asking price
- Days on market
- Price reductions
- Overall presentation
- Features compared to your home

Other Factors to Consider

- Price per square foot
- Market trends
- Interest rates
- Inventory levels
- Seasonality
- School districts

- Nearby amenities

Keep in Mind

No two homes are identical. Even neighboring homes can vary significantly in value due to updates, maintenance, floor plan, lot characteristics, views, or location within the neighborhood.

Online valuation tools can provide a starting point, but they cannot fully account for these differences.

Step 4: Estimate Your Net Proceeds

Many homeowners focus on what they hope to sell their home for.

An equally important question is:

"How much will I actually receive at closing?"

The sales price is only one part of the equation. Your estimated net proceeds are calculated after paying off any outstanding obligations and transaction-related expenses.

Knowing this number helps you:

- Plan your next purchase
- Budget for moving expenses
- Understand your available equity
- Avoid unexpected financial surprises

Common Expenses That May Reduce Your Proceeds

- Mortgage payoff
- Home equity loans or liens
- Property taxes
- HOA resale documents or transfer fees
- Title and escrow fees
- Repairs completed before closing
- Buyer concessions
- Home warranty (if offered)
- Moving expenses
- Potential capital gains taxes

Every transaction is different, so actual costs will vary.

PHASE 2 — KNOW YOUR SELLING OPTIONS

There isn't just one way to sell a home.

The right approach depends on your goals, timeline, budget, comfort level, and the condition of your property. Some sellers want maximum exposure and the highest possible sale price. Others prioritize speed, convenience, minimizing repairs, or maintaining greater control over the process.

The following options each offer different advantages and trade-offs. Understanding how they compare can help you choose the approach that best fits your situation.

Option 1: Sell It Yourself (For Sale By Owner - FSBO)

Some homeowners choose to sell their property themselves without hiring a listing agent. This approach is commonly referred to as For Sale By Owner (FSBO).

As a FSBO seller, you're responsible for managing every aspect of the transaction, including:

- Researching the market and pricing your home
- Preparing the home for sale
- Taking photographs and writing the property description
- Marketing the property
- Scheduling and hosting showings
- Communicating with buyers and their agents
- Reviewing and negotiating offers
- Managing contracts and deadlines
- Coordinating inspections, appraisal, title, and closing

Marketing as a FSBO

You don't have to hire an agent to market your home publicly.

Many FSBO sellers advertise through:

- Yard signs
- Zillow's FSBO platform
- Facebook Marketplace
- Social media
- Community groups

- Personal networks
- Word of mouth

Some homeowners also choose to pay a flat-fee MLS service, allowing their property to appear on the MLS and many of the major real estate websites while still handling the transaction themselves.

Advantages

- Full control over the selling process
- Potential savings on listing representation
- Direct communication with prospective buyers

Considerations

- Significant time commitment
- Marketing responsibilities
- Pricing the home accurately
- Managing negotiations
- Understanding contracts and deadlines
- Coordinating the transaction through closing

FSBO can be a good fit for homeowners who are comfortable managing a complex transaction and have the time to dedicate to the process.

Option 2: Hire a Listing Agent

Many homeowners choose to work with a licensed real estate professional to help market and sell their home.

While every agreement is different, a listing agent typically assists with:

- Developing a pricing strategy
- Preparing the home for market
- Professional marketing
- Listing the property on the MLS
- Coordinating showings
- Communicating with buyers and their agents
- Reviewing and negotiating offers
- Managing deadlines
- Coordinating inspections, appraisal, title, and closing

Properties listed on the MLS are often syndicated to major real estate websites, providing broad exposure to buyers searching online.

Advantages

- Professional guidance throughout the process
- Broad marketing exposure
- Assistance with negotiations
- Transaction management from listing through closing

Considerations

- Professional services typically involve compensation agreed upon between the seller and the listing brokerage.
- Sellers should understand what services are included before entering into a listing agreement.

Option 3: Sell Directly to a Buyer

Instead of broadly marketing your home to the public, you may choose to sell directly to a specific buyer.

These buyers may include:

- Individual cash buyers
- Local investors
- Rental property owners
- Home-buying companies
- Neighbors
- Family members
- Friends

Some direct buyers purchase homes using cash, while others may still obtain financing.

Because these transactions often involve fewer parties and less public marketing, they can sometimes move more quickly than a traditional sale.

Advantages

- Faster timeline
- Fewer showings
- Greater privacy
- May require less preparation

Considerations

- Less competition between buyers

- Sale price may differ from what could be achieved through broader market exposure
 - Terms vary significantly depending on the buyer
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Option 4: Sell Through an Auction

Some sellers choose to market their home through an auction.

Rather than negotiating privately with buyers, interested parties compete by submitting bids during a scheduled auction event.

Auctions are more common for:

- Unique properties
- Luxury homes
- Estate sales
- Distressed properties
- Foreclosures
- Certain investment properties

Depending on the auction format, the highest bid may become the winning offer.

Advantages

- Defined selling timeline
- Competitive bidding
- Increased urgency among buyers

Considerations

- Not appropriate for every property
 - Auction fees may apply
 - Final sale price depends on buyer demand and auction terms
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Choosing the Right Selling Approach

There isn't one universally "best" way to sell a home.

Each option offers different advantages depending on your priorities.

If your priority is...	You might consider...
Maximum market exposure	Listing on the MLS (with a listing agent or a flat-fee MLS service)
Managing the process yourself	For Sale By Owner (FSBO)
Selling quickly	Selling directly to a buyer
Minimizing repairs	Selling directly to an investor or pricing the home to reflect its current condition
Creating buyer competition on a specific date	Auction

Selling Approach	Highest Price	Fastest Sale	Most Convenient	Repairs Usually Needed	Best For
Sell it yourself (FSBO)	★★★★★	★★★	★	Varies	Experienced DIY sellers
Hire Listing Agent	★★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	Sometimes	Maximizing value
Cash Buyer	★★★	★★★★★★	★★★★★★	Rarely	Speed & certainty
Investor	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	Usually not	Homes needing repairs
Auction	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	Varies	Unique properties

Note: Some investors purchase properties with cash, while others use financing. Likewise, not all cash buyers are investors. These categories often overlap but are not the same.

As you continue through this guide, you'll learn the steps involved in selling a home regardless of which approach you choose. Some phases may look a little different depending on your selling method, but understanding the overall process will help you evaluate your options from start to finish.

PHASE 3 — PREPARING YOUR HOME

Step 1: Gather Important Documents

Preparing documents before listing your home can save time later and help answer buyer questions more efficiently.

Depending on your property, helpful documents may include:

- Property survey (if available)
- HOA information
- Utility information
- Appliance manuals
- Warranty information
- Repair receipts
- Permit records
- Roof information
- HVAC service records
- Foundation repair documentation
- Previous inspection reports (if applicable)

Having organized records can also demonstrate that the property has been well maintained.

Step 2: Decide Which Repairs Are Worth Making

One of the biggest questions sellers face is:

"Should I fix it before selling?"

The answer depends on two things:

- Your goals as the seller.
- The type of buyer you're trying to attract.

Not every improvement increases your home's value, and not every buyer is looking for the same type of property.

Before investing money into repairs or renovations, it's helpful to understand how different buyers evaluate homes.

Owner-Occupants

Owner-occupants are purchasing a home to live in.

Many are looking for a property that feels clean, well-cared for, and move-in ready. While cosmetic updates aren't always necessary, deferred maintenance or obvious repair issues can discourage some buyers or lead to repair requests later.

Owner-occupants often appreciate:

- Fresh paint
 - Clean flooring
 - Working mechanical systems
 - Good curb appeal
 - Updated fixtures
 - Functional kitchens and bathrooms
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First-Time Home Buyers

Many first-time buyers have already stretched their budgets to cover their down payment and closing costs.

As a result, they may place extra value on homes that don't require immediate repairs after moving in.

Simple improvements that reduce perceived maintenance can make a home more attractive to this group.

Move-Up Buyers

Move-up buyers are often looking for more space or upgraded features.

While many are willing to personalize a home over time, they generally expect major systems to be functioning properly and significant deferred maintenance to be addressed.

Investors

Investors often prioritize financial performance over cosmetic appearance.

Rental property investors may be perfectly comfortable purchasing homes that need cosmetic improvements if the numbers make sense.

They often focus on:

- Purchase price
 - Rental income
 - Repair costs
 - Return on investment
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Flippers

Flippers intentionally seek homes that need updating.

Rather than paying a premium for completed renovations, they typically look for opportunities where they can purchase below market value, renovate the property, and resell it for a profit.

Homes requiring significant cosmetic updates may still attract flippers if they're priced appropriately.

Before Spending Money

Ask yourself:

- Will this repair improve buyer confidence?
- Will it improve the home's first impression?
- Will buyers notice this immediately?
- Will it help my home sell faster?
- Is the cost likely to increase the sale price?
- Am I targeting buyers looking for move-in ready homes or buyers looking for an opportunity?

Every home is different. The goal isn't necessarily to create a perfect house—it's to prepare your home for the type of buyer you're hoping to attract.

Step 3: Prepare Your Home for Buyers

Preparing your home isn't about making it perfect—it's about helping buyers picture themselves living there.

Most buyers begin forming an opinion before they even walk through the front door. Small improvements in presentation can significantly influence how buyers perceive your home's condition and value.

The goal is to highlight your home's strengths while minimizing distractions.

Inside the Home

Focus on creating a clean, bright, and welcoming environment.

Consider:

- Deep cleaning every room
- Decluttering countertops and surfaces
- Organizing closets and storage areas
- Removing excessive personal photos and décor
- Touching up paint where needed
- Replacing burned-out light bulbs
- Repairing minor cosmetic issues
- Cleaning windows and mirrors
- Eliminating odors
- Making sure all lights and ceiling fans operate properly

Remember, buyers aren't just looking at living spaces—they're opening cabinets, closets, pantries, and garages to understand how the home functions.

Outside the Home

Curb appeal sets expectations before buyers ever step inside.

Simple improvements may include:

- Mowing and edging the lawn
- Trimming shrubs and trees
- Refreshing mulch
- Removing weeds
- Cleaning gutters
- Pressure washing sidewalks and driveways
- Cleaning exterior windows
- Painting or touching up the front door
- Replacing worn welcome mats
- Storing trash bins out of sight

Safety & Functionality

While buyers are often drawn to cosmetic updates, they also pay attention to whether a home appears to be safe and well maintained. Small issues can raise concerns about how the property has been cared for, even if they're inexpensive to fix.

Before listing, consider addressing simple items such as:

- Replacing smoke detector batteries
- Tightening loose handrails or stair railings
- Repairing loose door handles or cabinet hardware
- Fixing sticking doors or windows
- Repairing trip hazards, such as loose flooring or uneven walkways
- Ensuring gates, locks, and latches function properly
- Verifying that major systems and appliances are operating as expected

Addressing these small items can help buyers focus on the home itself rather than wondering what other maintenance may have been overlooked.

Optional Improvements

Depending on your market and target buyer, you may also consider:

- Professional staging
- Virtual staging for vacant homes
- Professional photography
- Drone photography (where appropriate)
- Twilight photography
- A pre-listing home inspection

While these aren't required, they may help present the home more effectively to prospective buyers.

Step 4: Complete Seller Disclosures

In Texas, many sellers are required to disclose known information about the property's condition. The key word is **known**.

Disclosures generally relate to conditions the seller is aware of not issues that have never been discovered.

Disclosures help buyers understand the property's history and make informed purchasing decisions.

Examples of items commonly disclosed include:

- Foundation movement or repairs
- Roof repairs or leaks
- Plumbing issues
- Electrical issues
- HVAC problems
- Water intrusion or flooding
- Previous insurance claims
- Pest infestations
- Environmental hazards
- Structural repairs
- Additions or improvements

Providing complete and accurate disclosures promotes transparency and can help reduce disputes after closing.

PHASE 4 — PRICING & MARKETING

Step 1: Develop Your Pricing Strategy

Pricing is one of the most important decisions you'll make throughout the selling process.

The right price can generate interest, encourage showings, and attract competitive offers.

The wrong price can cause a home to sit on the market, require price reductions, or ultimately sell for less than it might have otherwise.

Pricing isn't about choosing the highest number possible.

It's about positioning your home where qualified buyers are willing to act.

Pricing Above Market

Some sellers intentionally list above market value, hoping buyers will negotiate downward.

Potential advantages:

- Leaves room for negotiation
- Tests the market

- May capture buyers willing to pay a premium

Potential disadvantages:

- Fewer showings
 - Longer time on market
 - Multiple price reductions
 - Buyers overlooking the home because it exceeds their search criteria
 - Risk of becoming "stale" in buyers' minds
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Pricing at Market

Pricing near current market value often attracts the broadest pool of qualified buyers.

Potential advantages:

- Increased buyer interest
 - More showings
 - Stronger negotiating position
 - Greater likelihood of receiving offers sooner
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Pricing Below Market

Some sellers intentionally price below market value to generate significant interest.

Potential advantages:

- Increased traffic
- Potential multiple-offer situations
- Faster sale

Potential disadvantages:

- Lower initial asking price
 - Outcome depends heavily on buyer demand in the market
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Pricing Isn't Permanent

Many sellers worry they'll choose the wrong price.

Fortunately, pricing can be adjusted.

If your home receives little interest after sufficient exposure, it may be worth evaluating:

- Pricing
- Presentation
- Marketing
- Buyer feedback
- Current competition

The market ultimately determines value—not the list price.

Timing the Market vs. Timing Your Move

While market conditions can influence buyer activity, the best time to sell is often **when it aligns with your personal goals, financial situation, and readiness to make a move.**

Factors such as inventory levels, buyer demand, interest rates, and local economic conditions can all affect how quickly a home sells and at what price. However, these factors are constantly changing, making it difficult to predict or perfectly time the market.

Rather than waiting for the "perfect" market, many homeowners find greater success by focusing on what they can control: preparing their home well, pricing it competitively, and listing when the timing makes sense for their individual circumstances.

A well-prepared home that's priced appropriately can attract buyers in many different market conditions.

Step 2: Create Your Marketing Plan

Even the most beautiful home won't sell if buyers don't know it exists.

A strong marketing plan increases exposure and helps attract qualified buyers.

Depending on how you choose to sell, marketing may include:

Photography

High-quality photos are often the first impression buyers have of your home.

Good lighting, thoughtful composition, and clean spaces can make a significant difference.

Video

Video walkthroughs can help buyers better understand the home's layout before scheduling a showing.

Property Description

Your listing description should highlight:

- Unique features
- Recent updates
- Neighborhood benefits
- Floor plan
- Outdoor spaces
- Lifestyle advantages

Rather than simply listing rooms, focus on what makes the property appealing.

Online Exposure

Many buyers begin their search online. Your home may be marketed through:

- MLS (if applicable)
- Zillow
- Realtor.com
- Redfin
- Brokerage websites
- Company websites
- Social media
- Email campaigns

Yard Sign

A yard sign continues to be one of the simplest ways to attract local interest and neighbors who may know someone looking to move nearby.

Open Houses

Open houses allow multiple buyers to view the property during scheduled times.

They're one of several marketing tools and may or may not be appropriate depending on your home and local market.

Step 3: Publish Your Listing

Once your home goes live, activity often increases quickly.

During the first few days and weeks, you may receive:

- Showing requests
- Questions about the property
- Requests for additional information
- Buyer feedback
- Offers

The early listing period often generates the greatest amount of attention because new listings are frequently highlighted on real estate websites and saved searches.

Step 4: Manage Showings

Showings give buyers the opportunity to experience your home in person.

The easier your home is to show, the more opportunities buyers have to view it.

Before Each Showing

- Turn on lights
- Open blinds and curtains
- Adjust the thermostat for comfort
- Secure valuables
- Minimize odors
- Remove or secure pets
- Tidy countertops
- Make beds
- Empty trash bins

During Showings

Whenever possible, it's generally best for sellers to leave the property.

Buyers often feel more comfortable exploring the home and discussing it openly when the owner isn't present.

After Showings

Feedback can provide valuable insight. Common comments may relate to:

- Price
- Condition
- Layout
- Updates
- Odors
- Cleanliness
- Competition

Not every suggestion requires action, but recurring feedback may indicate an opportunity to improve your home's appeal.

PHASE 5 — REVIEWING & NEGOTIATING OFFERS

Step 1: Understand an Offer

Receiving an offer is exciting!

Remember the purchase price is only one part of the contract.

A strong offer balances price with favorable terms and a high likelihood of closing successfully.

Common terms include:

- Purchase price
- Earnest money
- Option fee
- Down payment
- Financing type
- Closing date
- Possession date
- Contingencies
- Appraisal terms
- Buyer concessions
- Included personal property
- Home warranty requests
- Leaseback requests

Every term has the potential to affect your overall outcome.

Step 2: Compare Offers

When multiple offers are received, it's tempting to focus solely on the highest price.

However, the strongest offer isn't always the highest offer.

Consider evaluating:

Financing

- Cash
- Conventional loan
- FHA loan
- VA loan
- Other financing

Down Payment

A larger down payment doesn't guarantee closing, but it may indicate a stronger financial position.

Contingencies

Some offers contain more conditions than others.

Fewer contingencies may reduce uncertainty.

Closing Timeline

Does the proposed closing date align with your plans?

Buyer Concessions

Consider any requests for:

- Closing cost assistance
 - Repair credits
 - Home warranty
 - Other financial incentives
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Overall Strength

Ask yourself:

- Which buyer appears most likely to close successfully?
 - Which offer best matches my priorities?
 - Is a slightly lower offer worth accepting if it provides greater certainty?
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Step 3: Responding to Offers

Once you've reviewed and compared your offers, you'll need to decide how you'd like to respond. Receiving an offer doesn't mean you have to accept it as written. Depending on the terms and your goals, you generally have several options.

Accept the Offer

If the offer meets your needs, you can accept it as written. Once both parties have signed the contract and it has been delivered according to the contract terms, the transaction moves into the under contract phase.

Reject the Offer

If the offer doesn't meet your expectations, you may choose to reject it. The buyer may decide to submit another offer or move on to another property.

Counter the Offer

If you like the offer but want to change one or more terms, you can submit a counteroffer.

The buyer can then accept your counteroffer, reject it, or submit another counteroffer. Negotiations may continue until both parties reach an agreement or decide not to move forward.

Request Highest and Best Offers

If you receive multiple offers, you may choose to ask buyers to submit their "highest and best" offer by a specified deadline. This gives interested buyers an opportunity to improve their offer before you make a final decision.

Keep in mind that the highest purchase price isn't always the strongest offer. Financing, contingencies, closing timeline, concessions, and the overall likelihood of closing successfully should all be considered when making your decision.

Step 4: Accept an Offer

Once all parties have agreed to the terms, signed the contract, and the contract has been delivered according to its terms, the transaction officially moves into the under-contract phase.

At this point, additional deadlines begin.

The buyer will typically submit earnest money and, if applicable, an option fee according to the terms of the contract.

The focus now shifts from reaching an agreement to successfully completing the transaction.

PHASE 6 — UNDER CONTRACT

Step 1: Option Period & Inspections

Depending on the terms of the contract, the buyer may have an opportunity to conduct inspections.

Common inspections include:

- General home inspection
- Roof
- Foundation
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Sewer
- Pool
- Pest
- Structural

Inspection reports help buyers better understand the property's condition.

Possible outcomes include:

- Proceed without changes
- Request repairs
- Request financial credits
- Renegotiate
- Terminate the contract during the option period, if permitted

Step 2: Resolve Repair Requests

Inspection findings don't automatically require repairs.

If repair requests are made, sellers commonly choose to:

- Complete repairs before closing
- Offer a financial credit
- Reduce the purchase price
- Decline requested repairs

The outcome depends on the contract terms and the agreement reached between the parties.

Step 3: Appraisal

If the buyer is obtaining financing, the lender will typically order an appraisal.

The appraiser estimates the property's market value for the lender.

Possible outcomes include:

- Value supports the contract price
- Value exceeds the contract price
- Value is lower than the contract price

A low appraisal doesn't automatically end the transaction, but it may lead to additional negotiations.

Step 4: Buyer Financing

While inspections and appraisal are taking place, the buyer's lender continues processing the loan.

Additional documentation, underwriting review, and final approval may still be required before the loan receives final clearance to close.

Step 5: Title & Escrow

During this phase, the title company works behind the scenes to prepare for closing.

Responsibilities commonly include:

- Verifying legal ownership
- Identifying liens or judgments
- Confirming legal descriptions
- Reviewing the existing survey or coordinating a new one if required
- Calculating prorated taxes and fees
- Preparing closing documents
- Coordinating with lenders

- Ordering or coordinating any required HOA resale and transfer documents
- Scheduling closing

If title issues arise, they typically need to be resolved before ownership can be transferred.

Step 6: Prepare for Closing (If Applicable)

If you're still living in the home, begin preparing for your move well before closing.

Tasks may include:

- Hiring movers
- Packing belongings
- Scheduling utility transfers or cancellations
- Forwarding mail
- Cleaning the home
- Gathering keys, garage remotes, mailbox keys, gate openers, manuals, and access codes

Prepare the Home for the New Owner

As closing approaches, consider taking a few additional steps to help ensure a smooth transition for the buyer. These may include:

- Canceling or transferring lawn care, pool service, or other recurring services, if applicable
- Contacting your homeowners insurance provider regarding your coverage after closing
- Removing personal information from smart home devices, such as smart locks, cameras, thermostats, garage door openers, video doorbells, and security systems
- Providing manuals, warranties, and any available maintenance records for appliances or home systems that will remain with the property
- Removing all personal belongings unless otherwise agreed to in the contract

If you've already moved, use this time to ensure the property remains secure, clean, and ready for the buyer's final walk-through.

Step 7: Final Walk-Through

Shortly before closing, buyers typically perform one final walk-through.

The purpose is to confirm that:

- The home's condition hasn't materially changed.
 - Agreed-upon repairs have been completed, if applicable.
 - Included items remain with the property.
 - The property is ready for possession according to the contract.
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PHASE 7 — CLOSING

Step 1: Sign Closing Documents

At closing, you'll review and sign the documents necessary to complete the sale and transfer ownership.

Read documents carefully and ask questions if anything is unclear before signing.

Step 2: Funding & Recording

Once all required documents have been signed and all conditions have been satisfied:

- Funds are transferred.
- The deed is recorded with the county.
- Ownership officially changes hands.

The exact timing of funding and recording can vary depending on your location and the terms of the transaction.

Step 3: Transfer Possession

Unless otherwise agreed, possession is typically transferred according to the contract.

Provide the buyer with:

- House keys

- Mailbox keys
- Garage remotes
- Gate openers
- Alarm codes
- Smart home access information
- Appliance manuals (if available)

Congratulations! You've officially sold your home.

PHASE 8 — AFTER THE SALE

Step 1: Keep Your Closing Documents

Retain copies of important documents, including:

- Closing Disclosure or Settlement Statement
- Tax records
- Repair receipts
- Warranty information
- Closing paperwork

These documents may be helpful for future tax reporting or personal recordkeeping.

Step 2: Update Your Address & Accounts

Notify organizations such as:

- USPS
- Banks
- Credit card companies
- Insurance providers
- Employer
- Subscription services
- DMV
- Voter registration
- Friends and family

Updating your information promptly helps avoid missed mail and service interruptions.

Step 3: Understand Future Tax Considerations

Depending on your circumstances, selling a home may have tax implications.

Questions about capital gains, exclusions, or reporting requirements are best addressed by a qualified tax professional.

Would You Like Guidance Through These Steps?

Whether you choose to sell your home on your own or work with a real estate professional is entirely your decision. Selling a home involves much more than putting a sign in the yard. Understanding what each approach involves can help you decide which is the better fit for you.

Selling Without Representation

If you choose to sell your home without representation (commonly called For Sale By Owner or FSBO), you'll typically be responsible for:

- Researching market value and developing a pricing strategy
- Preparing the property for sale
- Marketing the home
- Scheduling and hosting showings
- Answering buyer questions
- Reviewing offers
- Negotiating price and contract terms
- Understanding contracts and disclosures
- Coordinating inspections, appraisal, title, and closing
- Tracking deadlines
- Managing communication between all parties

Working With a Listing Agent

A listing agent can guide you through all the above and may also provide:

- Comparative market analysis (CMA) and pricing guidance
- Marketing strategy

- Professional photography and listing coordination
- MLS exposure and online marketing
- Showing coordination
- Offer analysis
- Contract guidance
- Negotiation assistance
- Transaction management
- Problem solving throughout the process

A listing agent can also help coordinate with the other professionals involved in the transaction, such as title companies, lenders, inspectors, contractors, attorneys, surveyors, and other service providers as needed.

Understanding Listing Agreements

Texas law generally requires a written listing agreement before a real estate broker or sales agent markets a property for sale on a seller's behalf.

A listing agreement establishes the relationship between the seller and the brokerage and typically outlines:

- The services the brokerage will provide
- The listing price and marketing terms
- The length of the agreement
- The responsibilities of each party
- How the listing brokerage will be compensated

Before signing a listing agreement, sellers should read it carefully and ask questions until they understand the terms.

Understanding Listing Agent Compensation

Listing broker compensation is negotiable and is determined by the terms of the listing agreement between the seller and the listing brokerage.

The listing agreement generally specifies how the listing brokerage will be compensated if the property is sold during the agreement.

Common Seller Mistakes to Avoid

Even experienced homeowners can make mistakes during the selling process. Learning from these common mistakes can help create a smoother selling experience.

Some of the most common include:

- Expecting maintenance to add value like an improvement.
- Expecting upgrades to pay for themselves.
- Overpricing the home
- Ignoring buyer feedback
- Neglecting repairs or presentation
- Using poor-quality photos
- Limiting showing availability
- Focusing only on the highest purchase price instead of the strongest overall offer
- Waiting too long to prepare for closing
- Failing to disclose known issues
- Missing important contract deadlines
- Letting emotions influence negotiations

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Should I sell my home or keep it as a rental?**
 - It depends on your financial goals, personal circumstances, and the property's long-term potential. For some homeowners, keeping a property as a rental may be worth considering. For others, selling may better align with their goals or lifestyle. Because this decision involves financial, tax, legal, and investment considerations, it's best discussed with qualified professionals.
- **How do I know what my home is worth?**
 - The market ultimately determines a home's value based on what buyers are willing to pay. Reviewing comparable sales, current competition, market conditions, and your home's condition can help estimate a realistic value. An experienced real estate professional can also prepare a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA).
- **Should I make repairs before selling?**

- It depends. Some repairs may improve buyer confidence or help your home sell faster, while others may not provide a meaningful return on investment. Consider your goals, budget, timeline, and the type of buyer you're hoping to attract before deciding where to spend money.
- **What costs should I expect when selling?**
 - Common costs may include paying off your existing mortgage, title and escrow fees, property taxes, agreed-upon repairs or concessions, moving expenses, and any compensation agreed to in your listing agreement. Every transaction is different, so your actual costs will vary.
- **How long does it take to sell a home?**
 - Every market and property is different. The timeline depends on factors such as pricing, market conditions, buyer demand, property condition, financing, and negotiations. After a contract is executed, many transactions close within approximately 30–45 days, although timelines vary.
- **Should I be present during showings?**
 - Generally, no. Buyers often feel more comfortable exploring the home and discussing it openly when the seller isn't present. Leaving during showings can create a more relaxed environment and allow buyers to experience the home more naturally.
- **Can I sell my home "as-is"?**
 - Yes. In Texas, homes are generally sold in their current condition. Marketing a home "as-is" typically means the seller does not intend to make repairs before closing, although buyers may still inspect the property and request repairs or concessions during negotiations.
- **Should I accept the first offer?**
 - Not necessarily. The first offer isn't automatically the best, or the worst. Evaluate the entire offer, including price, financing, contingencies, requested concessions, closing timeline, and the overall likelihood of successfully reaching closing.
- **Do I have to accept an offer just because it's full price?**
 - No. Until both parties have agreed to all terms and signed the contract, you're generally not obligated to accept an offer. Sellers often consider many factors beyond price, including financing, contingencies, requested concessions, closing date, and the overall strength of the offer.
- **What if my home doesn't appraise for the contract price?**
 - A low appraisal doesn't automatically end the transaction. Depending on the contract and negotiations, the buyer and seller may agree to adjust the

purchase price, modify other terms, challenge the appraisal through the lender, or pursue other mutually acceptable solutions.

- **Will I have to pay the buyer's agent?**
 - Not necessarily. Buyer agent compensation is negotiable. Some buyers may ask the seller to contribute toward or fully cover their buyer agent's compensation as part of the purchase offer, while others may not. Like other terms of the offer, these requests can be negotiated and evaluated as part of the overall transaction.
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Final Thoughts

Selling a home is one of the most significant financial decisions many people will make. While every sale is unique, understanding the process can help you understand your choices, set realistic expectations, and reduce unnecessary stress.

Remember:

- There isn't one "right" way to sell a home.
- The best selling strategy depends on your goals, timeline, and circumstances.
- Price is only one part of a successful sale.
- Ask questions whenever something is unclear.
- Don't feel pressured to make decisions you don't fully understand.

I hope this guide has helped you better understand the home-selling process and given you greater confidence as you evaluate your options.

Whether you choose to work with me, another real estate professional, or sell your home on your own, my goal is the same: to help you move forward confidently with clear and objective information.

If you ever have questions along the way, don't hesitate to ask. Whether you're preparing to sell next month or simply exploring your options for the future, I'm always happy to be a resource.

About the Author

Andrew Lee is a REALTOR® with Real Broker, LLC. He believes people make the best real estate decisions when they have clear information, realistic expectations, and someone willing to educate rather than pressure them.

Before entering real estate full-time, Andrew spent more than 15 years in the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) industry, leading project teams, developing standards and processes, and supporting the planning and delivery of complex projects ranging from residential developments to multi-billion-dollar infrastructure programs.

His background in construction, project management, contracts, and risk assessment provides a unique perspective when helping clients evaluate properties and navigate real estate transactions.

In 2025, Andrew transitioned to real estate full-time to focus on serving clients, building stronger relationships within his community, and creating greater flexibility for his family.

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