

Home Selling Guide

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mrdwsellshomes.com | Reviewed October 9, 2026

A clear plan from preparation to closing.

A good sale plan starts with your goals, the property's condition, and the current competition. The right choices depend on your home, budget, timing, and next move.

1. Decide what you need from the sale

Write down why you are selling, when you want to move, and what needs to happen next. Are you buying another home, downsizing, handling an inherited property, or relocating?

- Discuss who owns the property and who can authorize a sale.
- Review any mortgage balances, liens, leases, or occupancy issues.
- Plan where you will live and how the move will be funded.
- If the property involves a trust, probate, divorce, or tax questions, involve the appropriate legal or tax professional early.

Ask your agent for an estimated net sheet : a breakdown of what you may keep after paying loans and selling costs.

2. Compare preparation with selling as-is

Do not start a large renovation just because you plan to sell. Compare the expense, time, likely buyer response, and your ability to manage the work.

- Begin with cleaning, decluttering, lighting, and easy access to rooms.
- Address safety concerns and obvious maintenance problems when practical.
- Discuss paint, landscaping, staging, and selected repairs before spending.
- Gather records for improvements, permits, warranties, and known problems.

As-is generally means selling in the present condition under the agreed terms. It does not erase applicable disclosure duties or city requirements. Buyers may still inspect and request changes if the contract allows them to.

3. Price from evidence

Your agent can prepare a comparative market analysis (CMA) , which compares relevant sold homes and current competition. It is a pricing tool, not an appraisal or a guaranteed sale price.

Look at location, size, condition, layout, permitted space, lot, and terms. Active listing prices show what sellers are asking. Closed sales show what buyers actually paid. Online estimates are a starting point and may miss important property details.

Ask how the proposed price compares with the homes buyers can choose today. Agree on when you will review showing activity and feedback. Pricing too high can limit interest, but a low price does not guarantee multiple offers.

4. Understand the listing agreement

Read the agreement before signing. Discuss the listing period, services, marketing, showing arrangements, fees, cancellation terms, and what happens if you find a buyer yourself. Compensation is negotiable.

If buyer-agent compensation or buyer credits are proposed, understand the amount, how it is authorized, and how it affects your proceeds. Decide with your agent rather than assuming every transaction uses the same arrangement.

5. Present the home honestly

Good photos, useful descriptions, accurate details, and reasonable showing access help buyers evaluate the property.

- Prepare the home before photography and keep it ready for appointments.
- Put away valuables and personal documents during showings.
- Discuss pets, work hours, tenants, and notice requirements.
- Review listing details for accuracy, including the property's current status.

Share known issues with your agent and complete applicable disclosures carefully. Disclose what you know; ask when you are unsure. Do not guess about permits or conceal a problem. Some sales have disclosure exemptions, but an exemption does not automatically remove every duty.

6. Compare the whole offer

The highest price is not always the strongest overall offer. Review the buyer's financing, proof of funds, deposit, contingencies, credits, timing, and possession terms.

- How much money will you keep after credits and costs?

- Is the financing supported by the information provided?
- What could delay or prevent closing?
- Does the schedule fit your move?
- What responsibilities are you agreeing to take on?

You can accept, reject, or counter. Get agreed changes in writing. An accepted offer begins the transaction; it does not guarantee that the sale will close.

7. Stay organized during escrow

Escrow coordinates funds and documents under the agreed instructions. You still need to provide records, respond to requests, and meet your deadlines.

- Track disclosure delivery, inspections, repair requests, and contingency dates.
- Provide access as agreed and keep the property in the required condition.
- Review title or payoff issues that could affect closing.
- Get repair, credit, or deadline changes documented and signed.
- Confirm how and when the buyer's contingencies are removed. Do not assume they disappear just because a date passes.

If a buyer cancels or misses a deadline, the contract and circumstances determine your options. Deposit disputes need careful review; do not assume you can keep the money automatically.

8. Understand your estimated proceeds

Simple seller example

Example sale price: \$650,000. Mortgage payoff: \$300,000. Combined example selling costs: \$35,000. Buyer credit: \$10,000.

$\$650,000 - \$300,000 - \$35,000 - \$10,000 = \$305,000$ estimated proceeds .

These amounts are illustrations, not a fee quote or tax calculation. Actual payoffs, fees, prorations, credits, and taxes can change the result. Ask escrow for the final statement and your tax professional about any tax obligations.

9. Close and hand over the home

Review the final settlement statement, sign required documents, and confirm the agreed move-out and possession terms. Plan utilities, keys, remotes, and included items. Remove your belongings as required and arrange a clean handoff.

Wait for escrow's confirmation of completion. If you need to stay after closing, negotiate a written arrangement before relying on extra time.

10. If your previous listing did not sell

Review the evidence before relisting. Few showings suggest different questions from many showings without offers. An accepted offer that failed to close needs a review of the transaction records. Investigate price, presentation, access, condition, competition, and terms without assuming a single cause.

Seller checklist before going live

- I understand the pricing evidence and estimated proceeds.
- I have compared preparation costs with selling as-is.
- I know who can authorize the sale.
- I have discussed disclosures and local requirements.
- I understand the listing agreement and fees.
- I have a showing plan and a plan for my next move.

Common terms, in everyday words.

Equity

Your home's value minus what you owe on it. Selling costs reduce what you may take home.

Earnest money deposit

Money a buyer puts into escrow under the purchase agreement. It is generally applied to the purchase if the sale closes. Refunds and disputes depend on the contract and circumstances.

Title

The legal ownership of a property. A title review looks for recorded matters that may affect that ownership.

Contingency removal

Giving up a contract condition or protection as provided by the agreement. Understand the risk before signing.

Proration

Dividing a cost, such as property taxes, between buyer and seller for their agreed portions of time.

Seller credit

An agreed amount the seller contributes toward permitted buyer costs. Loan rules can limit how credits are used.

Pending

A property is under contract. It has not necessarily closed.

Helpful resources

General education for California residential buyers and sellers. Requirements and forms can change. Get advice for your property, loan, and signed agreement. Reviewed October 9, 2026.

- [CFPB: Understand and compare your Loan Estimate](#)
- [CFPB: Review your Closing Disclosure](#)
- [California DRE: Buyer representation agreements](#)
- [California DRE: Disclosures in real property transactions](#)

Ready to discuss your next step? Call or text 323-744-1037 or visit mrdwsellshomes.com/contact/.